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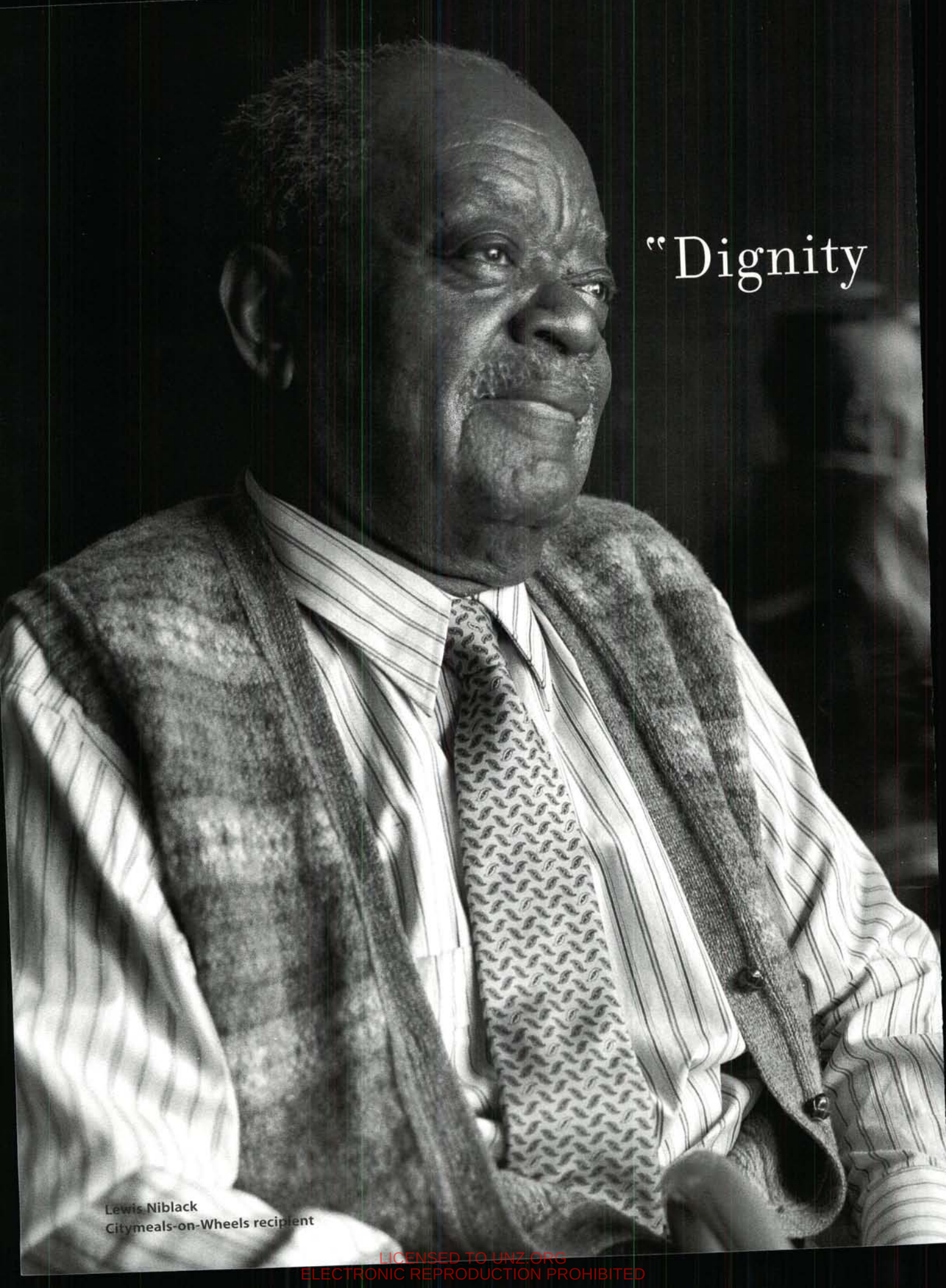

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NATIONAL REVIEW

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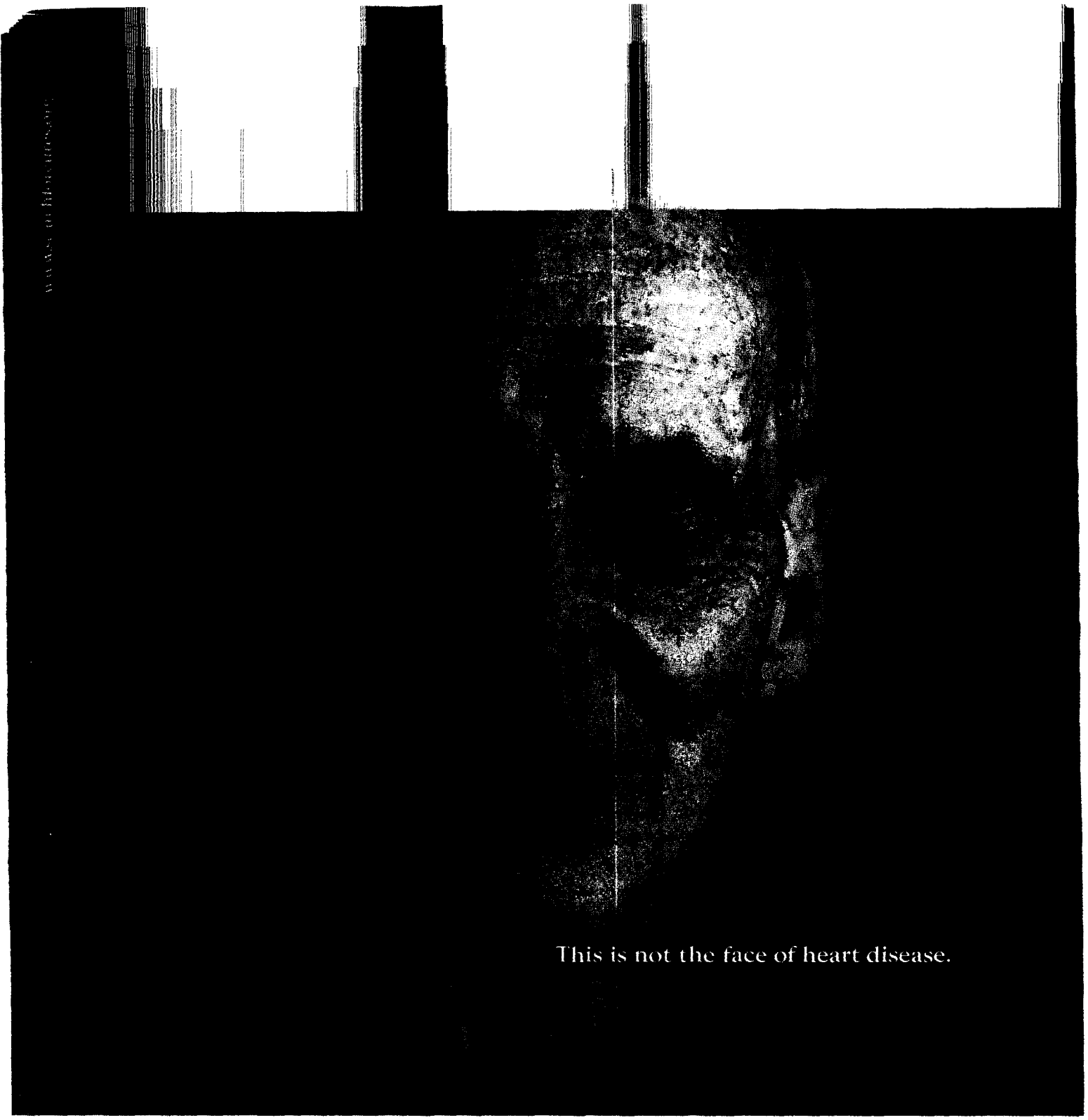

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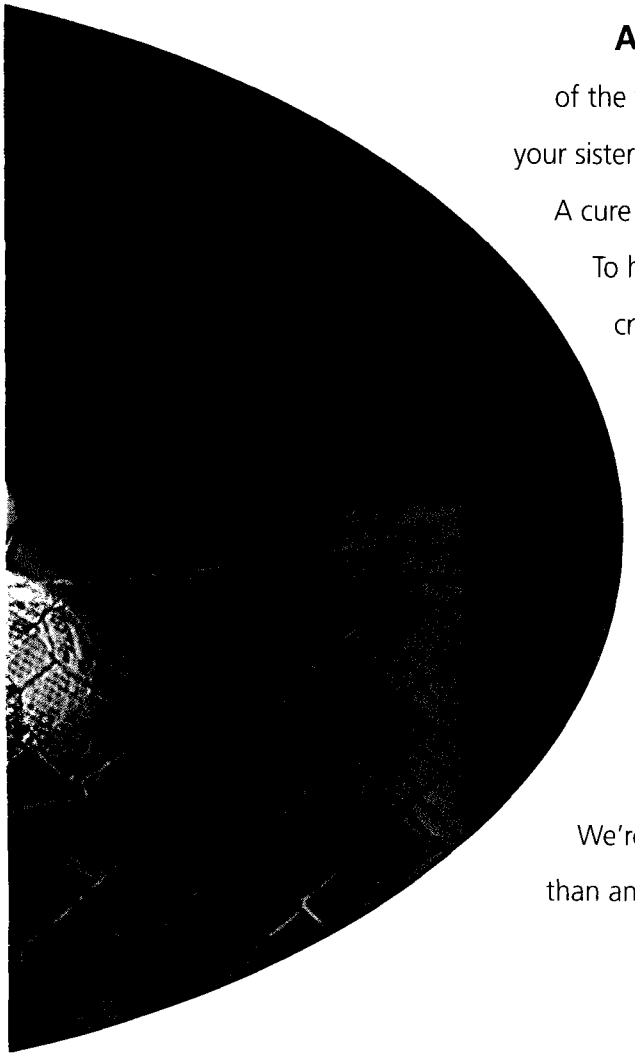

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■ LETTERS ■

THE WEALTH OF A NATION

Alan Reynolds's "We're Number One (Percent)" (Nov. 6) is a useful reminder that income statistics can be misleading when put in the hands of politicians. However, it would be wrong to conclude that rising income inequality is an imaginary issue.

The wealthy are both growing in number and getting wealthier, and it isn't likely that it is just because they are getting more educated or working harder. Meanwhile the poor are also growing in number and getting poorer, and it is not likely due to their studying fewer years or working less hard. Edwin Rubenstein, the Hudson Institute's research director, wrote recently that workers with only high-school degrees saw their real income plummet by 15 percent between 1979 and 1997.

It should be recognized, however, that it is not necessarily the same worker in 1997 who is earning less than he did in 1979. He may be a new worker, and he may be an immigrant, working legally or illegally. Harvard economics professor George Borjas has thoroughly documented that today's disproportionate flood of poorly educated immigrants is contributing to the depression of wages for the nation's lowest-earning workers.

Reynolds's analysis suggests that income inequality is not a problem, because the poor may eventually become wealthier by pulling themselves up by their bootstraps. Rubenstein's data suggest that earnings worsening sufficiently at the bottom end of the income scale could breed social turmoil. And Borjas's analysis reminds us that immigration is a discretionary policy of the federal government that may be changed if it conflicts with the national interest.

John Martin
Federation for American Immigration Reform
Washington, D.C.

DECLARATION OF WAR

Andrew J. Bacevich makes some excellent points about the faulty American understanding of the attack on the U.S.S. *Cole* in "Do-goodism Gone Bad" (Nov. 20). I would like to add one more.

Professor Bacevich quotes Admiral Vern Clark calling this an "act of terrorism," but it is nothing of the sort. There may be many definitions of what constitutes terrorism but every last one of them agrees on a basic fact: It involves an act against unarmed civilians, and not against the sailors of a mightily armed naval ship.

The attack on the U.S.S. *Cole* was not terrorism; it was an act of war. When will our leaders understand this and respond accordingly?

Daniel Pipes
Director, Middle East Forum
Philadelphia, Pa.

THE YANOMAMO

John J. Miller's article on Professor Chagnon and the Yanomamo ("The Fierce People," Nov. 20) is important. The *Homo sapiens* of prehistory were not angelic waifs whose example can lead us to nirvana. The "civilized," technological, free-market world is just that—a boon to our wealth, health, happiness, and behavior. Archeologist Lawrence H. Keeley's book, *War Before Civilization*, quantifies Chagnon's conclusions that precivilized humans were fierce and deadly in their dealings with each other. Arthur Quinn's *A New World* brings the point closer to home by reminding us there was nothing noble about the savagery of the indigenous North Americans.

Bob Chitester
McKean, Pa.

NO RESPECT

I am shocked that NATIONAL REVIEW would print such a disrespectful cover ("The Big Creep," Nov 20). This sends a terrible message to our young people. The office of president should be treated with respect, and so should the man occupying it. I may not agree with some of the things President Clinton has done, but I do think adults should set a good example for our young people by showing respect for our nation and its leaders.

Linda Mealer

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■ FOR THE RECORD ■

■ Vice President **Gore**, in preelection CNN interview, on "the real possibility that we could have a situation where one candidate wins the popular vote and another candidate become president because he's won the electoral vote": "We are fortunate as a people to have a Constitution that resolves all doubt as to what would happen in that situation. . . . If it did happen, I think the Constitution would be respected, as it always is." . . . Sen. **Robert Torricelli** (D., N.J.), in *New York Times*: "There is going to have to be a very compelling case for anybody to take this into a court of law. . . . It may begin in Florida, but it can go to other states and ultimately the presidency of the United States should not be decided by a judge." . . . Sen. **John Breaux** (D., La.): "Count the votes and respect the decision." . . . **Bill Bradley**: "My personal view is that when the votes are counted, that should be it. It is a perilous course to try to delay in the expectation that things will be turned around by lawyers. Unless there is something fraudulent or a flagrant violation of law, this should end on Nov. 17." . . . In *USA Today* poll, 61 percent of Gore voters and 66 percent of **George W. Bush** voters say they would accept other candidate as legitimate if he is inaugurated. . . . **George Will**, on Gore operatives' postelection maneuvers: "Their actions demolish the presidential pretensions of the dangerous man for whom they do their reckless work."

■ Sen. **Robert F. Bennett** (R., Utah), in *Washington Post*: "For the second time in my lifetime, a Chicago politician named Daley is trying to steal a presidential election." . . . **Herb Klein**, press secretary for **Richard Nixon** in 1960, on Gore campaign chief **Bill Daley**, in *Wall Street Journal*: "We felt that his father stole an election and here he is talking about contesting it and we didn't." . . . **Hillary Clinton** proposes abolishing Electoral College. . . . Sen. **Phil Gramm** (R., Texas), in *Houston Chronicle*: "If you eliminated the Electoral College, presidential candidates would never campaign outside the 20 large metropolitan areas." . . . Sen. **John McCain** (R., Ariz.), on *Meet the Press*: "The message to the voters of New York is clear. Mrs. Clinton wants to use the Senate seat as a stepping stone to the presidency." . . . In Polling Company survey, 56 percent say they would vote against Hillary Clinton if she ran for president. . . . **Rick Perlstein** writes in *American Prospect* that in Amazon.com's reader reviews, conservative books garner 80 percent five-star ratings; pro-Clinton books get 80 percent one-star ratings.

■ Rep. **Patrick Kennedy** (D., R.I.), in preelection speech, according to Voter.com: "If you want to know what happens when people don't turn out, all you need to do is look at **Newt Gingrich**, **Trent Lott**, **Dick Armey**, **Tom DeLay**, because this is the crowd that gets elected when working people don't show up. This is the right-wing crowd that does get elected. If you're a student of history, as I am, you study history. The fact of the matter is, we've always battled the right wing. There's always been a fascist kind of crowd in every society who's reactionary, that scapegoats people, who's more interested in power than the exercise of power for the good of the common will. So we have that battle today." . . . **Eron Shosteck** in *The Hotline*: "If Sens. **Ben Nighthorse Campbell** (R., Colo.) and **Richard Shelby** (R., Ala.) had not switched parties [after the 1994 elections], the Dems would effectively control the new Senate." . . . Sen. **Chuck Hagel** (R., Neb.) considers running for a Senate leadership post. . . . Princeton professor **Cornel West** blasts Electoral College as racist on HBO's *Chris Rock Show*. . . . Susan B. Anthony List, pro-life counter to EMILY's List, wins in 17 of its 22 congressional races, spending over $3 million.

"I almost hated to cure his amnesia. He didn't remember anything about the Clinton administrations."

■ Gore, on the campaign trail: "In my faith, I am taught that good overcomes evil if we choose that outcome." . . . Gore: "When my opponent, Governor Bush, says that he will appoint strict constructionists to the Supreme Court, I often think of the strictly constructed meaning that was applied when the Constitution was written, how some people were considered three-fifths of a human being." . . . **Tipper Gore**: "I think that a vote for my husband is the last best hope for everybody." . . . Gore, asked on CNN if **Bob Dylan** should become poet laureate: "That's really an excellent question. . . . I think it's actually something that's worth considering. How does that work? Doesn't the poet laureate change every so often? I think we just got a new one, didn't we? Someone in his 80s." (He is **Stanley Kunitz**, age 95.). . . The World Wrestling Federation sues Media Research Center president, **Brent Bozell**, calling him "a self-appointed zealot whose extremist views are so repugnant. . . ."

■ Madame Tussaud's Wax Museum in London prepares figures of both Bush and Gore. . . . Cuban foreign minister **Felipe Pérez**, in *Washington Post*, on an end to U.S. economic sanctions against his country: "closer than ever before." . . . North Korea returns remains of 15 soldiers believed missing since Korean War. . . . In Manchester, England, court-ordered separation of Siamese twins kills the weaker twin. Parents could not afford to appeal decision. . . . Taiwanese legislator **Lo Fu Chu**: "When I beat people up, it's because I'm trying to get legislation approved."

■ From **David Letterman**'s "Top Ten Ways the United States Would Be Different Without a President": "Instead of going to Iowa and New Hampshire every four years, no one would go to Iowa and New Hampshire ever." **NR**

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The Cost of Discrimination

F. Andrew Hanssen is a national fellow at the Hoover Institution and an assistant professor, Department of Agricultural Economics and Economics, at Montana State University.

The story of Jackie Robinson and his auspicious pairing with Brooklyn Dodgers' president Branch Rickey to break major league baseball's color barrier in 1947 is well known. Less well known is the role competitive market forces played in that story. The driving impetus behind baseball's integration was the desire to win games. Because the Dodgers wanted to win, they signed Jackie Robinson. And because other baseball owners also wanted to win, they could not continue to ignore African Americans once Jackie Robinson took the field. **The cost of remaining segregated when others integrated was too high.**

Three years earlier, the Dodgers had finished seventh in an eight-team league and Branch Rickey was under fire. Needing to win, he recognized the potential of the shunned African American ballplayers. "The greatest untapped reservoir of raw material in the history of the game is the black race!" he said. "The Negroes will make us winners for years to come, for which I will happily bear being called a bleeding heart and a do-gooder and all that humanitarian rot." Integrating unexpectedly, Rickey was careful not to announce the signing of Jackie Robinson until he had locked up several other top African American prospects, including future Hall of Famer Roy Campanella and future Cy Young Award winner Don Newcombe.

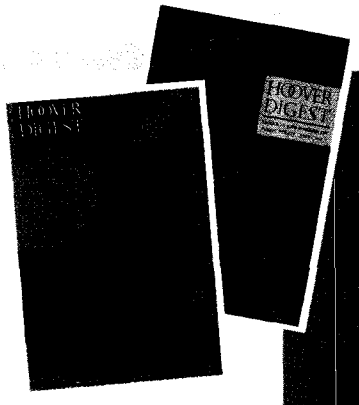
While the Dodgers were winning six National League pennants between 1947 and 1956, pressure was growing on other teams to integrate. The source of that pressure was not moral but financial. According to my statistical analysis, each African American player in the starting lineup was worth six additional wins to his team in 1950. That is a *big* number—the average gap between first and second place during the last fifty years has been about six games. Inevitably, the National League integrated.

The situation was slightly different in the American League, but the eventual result was the same. The dominant AL team until the mid-1960s was the New York Yankees, who paid the price for not signing African American players during the 1950s. Although the strength of their roster enabled them to continue winning for a while, their fifty years of dominance came to an end. In 1965, the Yanks lost more games than they won for the first time since 1919. Eleven years would pass before the next Yankee pennant; in that 1976 pennant win, six of the nine starters were African American.

The moral is that discriminating in a competitive setting is costly. Just as baseball teams that refuse to sign the best players lose more often, firms that refuse to hire the best available candidates regardless of race, gender, and so forth have higher costs, produce lower-quality products, or are slower to innovate than their nondiscriminating rivals. As Nobel Prize–winning economist Gary Becker points out, **society's best safeguard against persistent discrimination is competition.** Racist and sexist firms either mend their ways or go bankrupt. We can see the fruits of this lesson on the ball field, where today African American ballplayers make up 30 percent of all major leaguers.

— F. Andrew Hanssen

Paid for by the Hoover Institution, Stanford University.



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THE WEEK

■ Well, *that* was quite a flip-flop.

■ Bill Daley says he's never heard of an election with more "irregularities" than the presidential race in Florida. What, did he not pay attention at family dinners?

■ Meanwhile, in Missouri, Democrats have managed to get living voters to elect a dead candidate. Progress.

■ Sen. John Ashcroft, Republican from Missouri, had ample grounds to contest his election defeat. His opponent on the ballot, Gov. Mel Carnahan, had been dead for weeks, and a Democratic judge had ordered polling places in St. Louis to stay open longer than in other parts of the state. But Ashcroft decided to avoid a legal battle and allow Carnahan's widow, Jean, to succeed him. The Senate has lost a smart, hard-charging conservative, and a class act; but we hope that Washington has not lost him forever.

■ Mrs. Carnahan is just the latest grieving spouse to exercise her widow's might and exploit public emotions to claim her late husband's political perch. The widow's grab has become a bicameral, bipartisan feature of the mourning period following a politician's death. California Democrat Lois Capps won a 1998 special election to succeed her late husband in Congress, and in 1996 Missouri Republican Jo Ann Emerson made "a living memorial" of her late husband's seat in Congress. Sen. Olympia Snowe, Republican from Maine, began her political career in 1973 by replacing her late husband in the state legislature. Enough already. If we can't have term limits for breathing politicians, can we at least have them when they're dead?

■ Conservatives, still caught up in the anxiety surrounding the presidential race, should take a moment to mourn the loss of several conservative champions. The losses in Missouri were severe: Not only was Ashcroft unseated, but Rep. James Talent narrowly lost the race for governor to a Democratic cipher. In Minnesota, Rod Grams, the principal author of the $500 tax credit for children, lost his bid for reelection. Delaware voters brought an end to Sen. Bill Roth's long career of tax-cutting. Michigan's Spencer Abraham, though wrongheaded on immigration, has been an important conservative voice in the Senate; he ran a strong campaign, but Big Labor took him out. James Rogan, one of the impeachment managers, could not hang on to a congressional district that has been trending Democrat. And Rep. David McIntosh, one of the leaders of the "revolutionary" class of 1994, was unable to beat a popular, middle-of-the-road Democrat in the race for Indiana governor. Our thanks to all these conservatives for their services.

■ Hillary Clinton won her maiden Senate race on geography, and Rick Lazio lost it on issues. Upstate New York went Republican, as it always does. But by virtually moving there, Mrs. Clinton made herself a familiar face. She acknowledged the state's ongoing economic malaise (something Lazio was estopped from doing by the sponsorship of Gov. George Pataki, whose line is that everything is coming up roses). As a result, Republican margins were slim, while Mrs. Clinton romped in the City. Lazio did not match his opponent's energy with political finesse. The one issue his campaign team, heavy with old McCainiacs, focused on in the homestretch was campaign-finance reform. That won him some good copy for a week, but newspaper editorial boards continued to care more about it than voters did. And Lazio was not a blunt ex-POW. Mrs. Clinton had, and deserved, high negatives. Arrogant and slippery ("That is not going to be proven true"), she was bound to power and to the sham marriage that guaranteed her access to it. But now she has won power in her own right, and will celebrate her victory by planning to acquire more of it. Her ambition will not be satisfied, nor her wounds salved, until she fills the place she mortgaged so much of herself to help her husband win and keep.

■ If Al Gore loses the presidency for want of votes in Florida—or even if he wins, but his presidency is vitiated by doubts over the Florida vote count—it will be because tens of thousands of Cuban-Americans in Florida were outraged by the federal government's kidnapping of Elián González earlier this year, and voted Republican in revenge. Gore seems to have had a premonition of this at the time, and offered up a feeble dissent to the Clinton-Reno give-Castro-anything-he-wants policy, but nobody believed him. Elián is now back in Cuba, of course, memorizing the speeches of the Maximum Leader and chanting anti-American slogans at Young Pioneer rallies. One day, perhaps, he will understand that his own personal drama helped to discredit a man whose friends moved heaven and earth to transport a helpless child from freedom into slavery because of their affection, and admiration, for a homicidal tyrant.

■ The topic of media handwringing du jour is exit polls, specifically the way the networks erroneously called Florida on the basis of them before voting had even ended in the state. The networks have some explaining to do: Besides being wrong—twice—they called Florida for Gore before awarding Bush states where he had a comfortable margin, such as West Virginia and Ohio (where the polls closed before all of Florida's had). But calls for legislation are mistaken. Networks should be free to fritter away their credibility in any way they please, and voters across the country should not let their voting decisions

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hinge on network projections. The solution to poor reporting by the networks is simple: Don't believe them.

■ The Bush drunk-driving story, which dominated the news for 48 hours a few days before the election, might be the most frivolous news item ever to help sway a presidential election. The offense was 24 years old. Bush did not attempt to cover it up at the time, or later. When asked directly in 1996 if he had been arrested for drinking, Bush gave a pretty transparent non-denial ("I do not have a perfect record as a youth"). The media nonetheless jumped on Bush for allegedly Clinton-like evasions. Yet Clinton lied to the country for months, and lied repeatedly under oath. Bush's offense was merely to fail to lay bare every detail of his past. That may have been imprudent, given the rules of the media gotcha game, but it certainly wasn't "Clintonian."

■ Patrick Buchanan received fewer than half a million votes, compared with Ralph Nader's 2.7 million. Why didn't Buchanan's campaign take off? His illness, his court battles with other factions of the Reform party, and his temporary alliances with left-wing kooks such as Lenora Fulani could not have helped. But this year would have been difficult for him in any case: Conservatives, out of the White House for eight years, were hungrier for the presidency than leftists were and thus less willing to go on an ideological lark. (Buchanan's insurgency against Bush in 1992 had no leftist equivalent for the same reason.) Moreover, leftists could find a purer reflection of their views in Nader than in Gore, while Buchanan's conservatism was alloyed with statist, protectionist, and isolationist elements. Buchanan's political future looks limited as long as he seeks to command an army of peasants in a country where more people are living like lords of the manor. It is a sad end to a glorious career.

■ The movement to legalize assisted suicide suffered a blow on Election Day as voters in Maine soundly defeated a well-funded initiative to do so. A similar measure is expected to be introduced in California next year, but the Hemlock Society has little reason for optimism: Since physician-assisted suicide was made legal in Oregon in 1994, ten states have passed laws prohibiting it, and legalization initiatives have been defeated by voters in Michigan—and now Maine.

■ Popular support for medical marijuana was reconfirmed on Election Day as Nevada and Colorado joined Alaska, Washington, Oregon, California, Arizona, and Maine in passing medical-marijuana initiatives. (Hawaii's legislature and governor have approved a similar law, as have voters in the District of Columbia, though the latter were overruled by Congress.) This means medical marijuana is 9 for 10, which gives it a better political batting average than Bush or Gore. California voters also approved a law that would sentence those convicted of simple drug possession to treatment programs, rather than jail. Alaskans rejected a proposition that would not only have legalized pot, but awarded amnesty to those convicted of marijuana-related crimes—a sweeping ex post facto provision that deserved to be defeated. Voters continue to be ahead of their representatives on this one.

■ School choice lost big on Election Day, and the old excuses won't work. Voters in California and Michigan rejected ballot initiatives by 40-point margins. Both were well funded, so empty bank accounts in the face of teacher-union resources can't explain the routs. In the case of Michigan, a well-crafted proposal targeting failing school districts received significant support from the Catholic Church and other groups. Perhaps this is a lesson in how hard it is to get people to care about other people's children. Whatever the reason, a new tactical approach for the movement now seems essential. Where school choice has succeeded, as in Cleveland, Milwaukee, and Florida, it has been the creation of legislatures rather than referenda.

■ Out in California's Mojave Desert, on land controlled by the National Park Service, stands a memorial to local men who fought in the First World War. It is a popular site, visited by thousands every year. Unfortunately the memorial is in the shape of a cross, and this, of course, will not do in multicultural America. The ACLU threatened legal action, and the National Park Service has promised that the cross, which has stood for 66 years, will be removed. Says the ACLU's lawyer in the case: "A cross promotes Christian beliefs over others, which is not the role of government." And the role of the ACLU is what, exactly? To scour the nation for expressions of piety on public land, and have them removed so that people who draw comfort and inspiration from them can be deprived of their little solace? Have ACLU lawyers nothing better to do? Is anyone in the ACLU familiar with the word "discretion"?

■ These have been difficult years for Queen Elizabeth of England. First there were the serial embarrassments brought on the House of Windsor by its younger members. Then the British people in their collective wisdom elected into power a government with strong leanings towards republicanism, oblig-

Gore's Voices

His better angel counsels,
"Al, do what Nixon did,"
While from a shoulder, something horned
Advises, "Blow your lid!"
With Daley hurling brimstone
As Christopher exhales
Flame from a so-so liver, there's
Dyspepsia in the dales.

—W. H. von Dreele

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ing the Queen to make such concessions as payment of income tax. Her Majesty has apparently found consolation from these woes by acquiring a singing rubber fish. Visitors to her Scottish estate have been entertained with duet performances (Queen, fish) of the song "Don't Worry, Be Happy." So, at any rate, it is reported. Asked to confirm these fishy tales, a Buckingham Palace spokesman, after adjusting his monocle and flicking the snuff from his surtout, murmured only: "The Queen *may* have a singing fish, but more than that I couldn't say."

CAMPAIGN 2000

Florida Writhing

TECHNICALLY Al Gore may not have to steal this election to win it, but note his deliberated cover. In his wrapped-in-the-flag speech on Wednesday, the day after the vote, Gore acknowledged that "the winner of the Electoral College . . . will be the next President. But Mr. Gore prefaced that averral with a weighty proclamation: "Joe Lieberman and I won the popular vote."

Nothing more than postelection pride? Or was he laying down a marker? The next few days provided the explanatory context. On Thursday, Gore campaign manager William Daley, son of the last man to steal a presidential election, intoned that "If the will of the people is to prevail, Al Gore should be awarded a victory in Florida and be our next president." The *Washington Post* in an editorial correctly called this statement "a poisonous thing to say" in the "extraordinary and unsettling circumstances" of an ongoing recount. Poisonous, and imprudently forthright?

The Gore camp promptly pulled in its horns rhetorically. But its battle plan was already in motion. Gore's post-campaign campaign proceeded on several tracks simultaneously. The first track, which was beyond their control, was the provision of Florida law which automatically requires a recount of all ballots (presumably, using the same procedures by which they were first counted: i.e., mechanically) where the margin of victory is less than one-half of one percent of the total vote. This (unobjectionable) recount whittled Bush's lead from the neighborhood of 1,700 down to three digits. The second track, hinted at in Gore's Wednesday remarks, was there to build a case: that the winner of the popular vote should win the White House.

One of Hillary Clinton's first endorsements, as a Senator-elect was to the end of eliminating the Electoral College. If Gore fails to win in Florida, others will surely step forward to urge yet another step in the continuing strip tease of republican government (one man one vote; no literacy tests; 18-year-olds can vote; no Electoral College—no United States Senate?) Jesse Jackson pursued the second track on the streets. Jackson once showed bright flashes of eloquence, and even a certain cross-grained independence. All this has vanished as he acts the Democratic party hack, busing in folks of appropriate races for the demonstration du jour. Now he has been at it in Florida, alleging that blacks were intimidated at the polls, as in Selma during the days of white rule.

The final track was to suggest that the ballot in Palm Beach and other heavily Democratic counties was impossibly confusing, both to use and to tally. No matter that these butterfly punch ballots had been used in Florida and elsewhere for years, or that local Democratic officials had approved their use for 2000. No matter that hundreds of thousands of voters in Palm Beach managed to use them ballots without complaint. Palm Beach County has been painted as a benighted electoral Kosovo, requiring special monitoring. That the initial protests and law suits came from local voters, not from the Gore campaign directly, should fool no one. Gore went to court first, using surrogates. As of a week after Election Day, the Gore campaign was hip-deep in waters of confusion, seeking landfall only in a Gore victory. A second hand recount in four heavily Democratic counties—a subjective process with punch ballots (Are the dangling bits of paper three quarters detached? Half detached? Hanging by a thread?)—seemed likely to yield enough additional Gore votes to overtake Bush's lead, even with absentee ballots factored in.

Fearing just such a result, Republicans went to federal court to block the hand recount; failing that, Republican counties might also be hand recounted, but most of them do not use the punch ballot. The hand recount is a process available under Florida law, but Florida law also directs the secretary of state to certify a victor a week after the polls close, and to ignore late-reporting counties. Katherine Harris, the Republican who holds that post, did this, but a judge has stepped in to stipulate that her judgment must not be arbitary on the matter of recountings. No one should imagine, however, that if the hand recount goes wrong, the Gore campaign would not reactivate all of its other remaining tracks. There would be calls for a revote in Palm Beach; complaints about civil-rights violations; assaults on the Electoral College.

The American system depends on respect for the law; and respect for minimal norms of political combat. Horror-story elections from 1800 to 1876, which everyone learned about in high school and which have reappeared in sidebars in every newspaper, should not detract from the importance of trying to affirm those norms. By maneuvering to sanction recounts where they would be advantageous, and to block recounts where they appeared threatening, Gore Inc. threatens the crowning addition of Florida's electoral votes to the Bush column which the initial count authorized.

Mr. Gore needs to be very careful, because although apparently the victorious popular count gave him that moral cover noted, the popular plurality isn't a passport to a new Constitution in which existing electoral provisions are replaced. He will not, in this case, convincingly argue that there is no controlling legal authority. To get away with that, he would need two or three additional Gore-type appointees to the Supreme Court.

This issue went to press on November 15. For intensive, daily coverage of the election endgame, see nationalreview.com.

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CAMPAIGN 2000 II

Taking Stock

THE passing of Election Day leaves us in the dark about the identity of the next president, but considerably enlightened about the polity over which he will preside. The political parties are at rough parity, with the Republicans arguably ahead: They have 29 governors, and the congressional and presidential votes are split. Two generations of conservatives can indulge in some self-congratulation for achieving this parity. But the elections also suggest that conservatism's momentum within the electorate has stalled. If we continue on our present path, we will not attain a majority and will therefore fail to secure our aims.

The fault is not primarily Gov. Bush's. He ran a strong campaign, as evidenced by the fact that he was able to win 48 percent of the vote even as a challenger in a time of peace and plenty. He did, of course, make mistakes. Bush was curiously muted on the subject of the economy. In exit polls, more voters listed it as their top issue than any other, and Gore took their votes by 22 points. In addition, Bush's response to Gore's election-eve demagoguery on Social Security was incomplete: His ads noted that he would not cut benefits, but neglected to mention that he offered young people the prospects of high returns (a point he often made in stump speeches, to strong applause). The public favored his proposal, but its chief beneficiaries were not excited about it. Among those who voted on Social Security, Gore won by 18 points.

It must be said, however, that Bush's campaign was much more daring and principled than those of the congressional Republicans. They ran on incumbency and pork rather than tax cuts, Social Security reform, and school choice. Having won Congress in 1994 by nationalizing the elections, they have kept it since by fudging national issues and tending to local concerns. The Republican revolution has come full circle: Tip O'Neill is back.

Republican congressmen are, for the most part, neither fools nor knaves. They are politicians who recognize that they do not have the political strength to enact a substantial conservative agenda. And it does not look likely that they will have it any time soon.

At present, Republicans are not a majority party—but they may usefully be described as the party of the majority. When the electorate is divided into voting blocs, the majority bloc favors the Republicans. Protestants, who were 54 percent of the electorate, gave 56 percent of their votes to Bush. The 74 percent of the electorate who came from nonunion households gave 52 percent of their votes to Bush. But the two parties are at parity because the minority bloc is much more intense in its support for the Democrats. Members of union households went 59–37 percent for Gore. The heterosexual 96 percent of the voters preferred Bush to Gore, 50–47 percent, but the homosexual 4 percent gave 70 percent of their votes to Gore: hence parity. The same pattern applies when voters are grouped by marital status or geography (a map of the vote by county shows a Republican sea surrounding tiny, but teeming, Democratic islands).

The Hand Counter

Al Gore carefully inspects a pregnant—or is it a dimpled, or hanging, or tri?—chad.

The pattern applied as well, of course, to race. Bush tried, more than any previous Republican candidate had, not to offend liberal sensitivities on race. He embraced immigration, supported bilingual education, obscured his position on race preferences, appeared before the NAACP, split the difference on hate crimes, and had Colin Powell guilt-trip the Republican convention. His reward: 35 percent of the Hispanic vote and a smaller share of the black vote than Bob Dole got in 1996. Asian-Americans, who favored Bob Dole and Bush's father, supported Gore by a 14-point margin.

So the kinder, gentler strategy on race flopped. Pacific gestures are not enough to overcome a constant stream of propaganda in the black media to the effect that Republicans are lynchers and church-burners—Klansmen in suits. What few Republican ads ran on black radio stations made the case that Republicans weren't that bad, were getting better by the day, and might one day be worthy of blacks' votes. This approach doesn't get blacks to vote Republican, or even to stay home (which is its real intent). Republicans would have been better off with a less apologetic stance, one that indicted Democrats for keeping blacks' taxes too high and their kids in failing and dangerous schools.

And they should have campaigned against race preferences. Doing so might have won some white-working-class votes in places like Michigan and Pennsylvania, which Bush lost. It could hardly have inflamed blacks against Republicans any more than the Democrats did. And any substantial political realignment of blacks will in any case have

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to follow the destruction of the corrupt networks of racial patronage that keep today's black political elite in power.

The black electorate, in other words, has to be transformed; and not only the black electorate. All the evidence of the last five years suggests that the conservative coalition cannot expand much within the bounds of the existing electorate. The Christian conservative movement has stopped growing. Libertarian conservatives are thin on the ground. Every attempt to expand the conservative coalition—from Buchananism to "national greatness"—has failed, expelling more members from the coalition than it attracts.

The Democrats are not content with the existing electorate. That's why Clinton and Gore have sped up immigrant naturalization at election time. Unlimited immigration is expanding the Democratic constituency for big government and multiculturalism. (Immigrants from Asia may tend to be more conservative than their neighbors, but as Steve Sailer points out, that's no comfort when they tend to settle in some of the most liberal enclaves in the country, from New York to San Francisco.) Since the beginning of the Republican party, voting for it has been a mark of assimilation to the national culture. Continuing mass immigration impedes that process, and Republicans ought to rethink it—if not for their nation's interest, then for their own political survival.

Republicans can change the electorate, too, in more salutary ways. The expansion of the new investor class is a case in point. Those Republicans who have paid any attention to it seem to believe that it is a trend that will inevitably benefit them, with no exertions on their part required. But the new investors are a natural conservative constituency, not an inevitable one. They favored Republicans in the election, but not by much. Many investors come over time to see the links between their finances and their political behavior. But conservatives can help them along—not only by supporting policies that benefit them, but by targeting them with direct mail and advertising.

In other words, conservative political success depends on a citizenry that is culturally cohesive and that sees its interest in liberty; and those tendencies within the citizenry can be encouraged. The point is not merely to understand the electorate, but to change it.

THE ELECTORAL COLLEGE

Don't Drop Out

EVERY time the Electoral College comes up for discussion, so do proposals to abolish it in favor of a direct popular vote. The main reason this will probably never happen is that getting rid of the Electoral College would require a constitutional amendment, and too many small states are committed to keeping it. This year, in pursuit of a narrow victory, Bush and Gore spent serious time in a slew of small states, from Washington to West Virginia. Such places would never see a presidential candidate, if all the votes were thrown into a common pot. The United States has always been a big country, even in 1789 when its population was small, and regional differences have always had ideological and temperamental effects. Liberals in Oregon and Michigan are not the same; neither are conservatives in Mississippi and New Hampshire. It is good that candidates should have to tool their messages to address a variety of concerns.

An even more important reason for keeping the Electoral College is to avoid massive vote fraud. Under the current system, thieves must concentrate their efforts to steal close elections in selected states: Illinois in 1960, Florida in 2000. This makes successful vote fraud in presidential elections a rare event, almost a specialty of the Daley family. In a national popular vote, any fraudulent vote anywhere could tip the scales.

The Electoral College is attacked as a frustration of the people's will. But the people's will is multiform. They express it when they respond to polls; when they buy and sell; when they speak; when they vote for senators, congressmen, and school supervisors. Each expression is slightly different. The Electoral College is a frame for catching the views of a nation stretching over several time, and thought, zones. It gave us James Buchanan, and may well give us Al Gore. But it also gave us Lincoln and Reagan. It should be preserved.

OBITUARY

Ring Lardner Jr., R.I.P.

THE last surviving member of the Hollywood 10 died on October 31, aged 85. As it happened, I met him on a blustery day last spring—in his own apartment.

Coming back from my morning walk in Central Park, I encountered a lady who was struggling against the wind. I asked if I could help her. I could. I asked if she would like me to see her home. She would.

The woman was Frances Chaney Lardner, wife of the once-blacklisted writer. She was delighted to learn that I was a journalist. Would I please come up and meet her husband? I demurred, but she insisted. And so—in shabbiest clothes on Central Park West—I ascended in the elevator to the Lardner apartment.

Some would call this "Only in New York." I started out the morning ordinarily; I ended it in Ring Lardner's home looking at his Oscars. There were two of them: one for *Woman of the Year*, the other for M*A*S*H. I had never seen an Oscar before—they're big.

The walls were covered with memorabilia, including photographs of actors, and athletes, and writers. One item in particular drew my attention, so emblematic was it of this couple: It was a certificate showing that Mrs. Lardner had won the Roger Baldwin Award of the Massachusetts—not the American, mind you, but the Massachusetts: even better—Civil Liberties Union.

We had a nice chat, and Mr. Lardner—who was sharp as a tack, but deficient in hearing—treated his wife with charming and touching tenderness. After a while, a moment of

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truth came. Asked Mrs. Lardner, "Where do you work, Jay?"

Please consider the situation: I work for NATIONAL REVIEW. I was talking to a couple one of whom went to jail for refusing to testify before HUAC.

After an awkward pause, I cleared my throat and said, "Mrs. Lardner, I work for NATIONAL REVIEW. I'm afraid I'm a bit of a conservative." (I'm not sure why I threw that "a bit of" in there—must have felt the need to soften it.)

Mrs. Lardner's eyes danced, and she said, "Oh, Jay, don't be embarrassed! We won't judge you! We're very open-minded people!" I smiled, sort of relieved. Turning to her husband, she touched his knee and repeated herself: "Oh, Ring: Jay's embarrassed. But, really: We don't judge him. We're very open-minded people!"

Mr. Lardner just smiled, gently—seeming less sure, perhaps.

We continued our visit and after much expression of goodwill bade farewell.

This was a strange and memorable encounter, full of meaning, I suspect. Communism, to me, is monstrous. My anti-Communism, to them, must have been little less. Yet here we were, three friendly strangers, happy to get to know one another a little on a blustery spring morning.

"The human element" runs strong.

—JAY NORDLINGER

■ NOTES & ASIDES ■

■ Dear Mr. Buckley: Notwithstanding the relative enlightenment of our age, I wish I had been born earlier. I was born in 1972, and though I began watching *Firing Line* and reading NATIONAL REVIEW with bursting admiration in my high-school days, I regret deeply that I never saw you speak in person.

I read recently that you do not plan to speak in public again, save at your granddaughter's wedding. If this event is contemplated, I'd be eternally obliged if you'd shop my name around. A few vital statistics: I'm 5'11", (a well-proportioned) 170 lbs., with dark hair and brown eyes. I attended the College of the Holy Cross and worked on Wall Street for four years. Currently I am enrolled in the MBA program at the University of Texas at Austin. I am confident in saying that I wouldn't be a bore at the reception, as I enjoy drinking cocktails, albeit in moderation. I'm not very talented, but always willing to dance with anyone who is brave enough to join me. If the wedding has already taken place, I suppose I'm out of luck. But there will be no hard feelings, I assure you. I hope you are enjoying your semiretirement.

Sincerely,
William J. DiSciullo Jr.
Austin, Tex.

Dear Mr. DiSciullo: Your credentials are first-rate. There is the problem that you will need to remain a bachelor for about . . . five or six years. But I'll make a hell of a speech! Just call me Dad.

Cordially, WFB

■ Dear Mr. Buckley: Your description of dolichocephaly as being a somatic measurement in which the "vertical length of the head" is proportionately greater than its width, is incorrect. The cephalic index, which defines long-headedness (dolichocephaly) and round-headedness (brachycephaly), is based on the ratio of the transverse (across) diameter of the skull to the antero-posterior (front-to-back) diameter. The vertical length of the head, whatever that means, has nothing to do with it.

I do remember John Carradine and Leslie Howard, and they did indeed have long heads in the vertical direction, and Mickey Rooney didn't, but I wouldn't even make a guess as to what their cephalic indexes were.

I enjoy your magazine very much, especially Florence King—my kind of woman.

Yours truly,
Russell McFadden
West Columbia, Tex.

Dear Mr. McFadden: All I can say is, that's not what I was taught at school, which is as I put it. I looked at *Heritage* and found: "*dol'i'cho'ce'phal'ic*, also dolichocephalous, *adj.* Having a relatively long head with a cephalic index below 76 [Greek *dolikhos*, long; . . .]." Glad you enjoy the mag and Miss King. So do we all; so does *everybody* whose cephalic index is higher than 0.

Cordially, WFB

■ Dear Mr. Buckley: I asked you about the difference between "non-profit" and "not-for-profit"; you were not certain. The wording continued to haunt me, until the following thought occurred: If such a company should make a profit, would it be tax free, making the executives wealthier?

Respectfully,
William M. Fuchs, M.D.
Huntington, N.Y.

Dear Dr. Fuchs: I should think that a not-for-profit corporation would be required to distribute a surplus among its chartered beneficiaries. The executives can always realize a greater return for themselves by increasing their emoluments, assuming that contributions (and trustees) make this possible.

Cordially, WFB

■ Dear Mr. Buckley: A gent wrote that his ear was chewed by a John Birch Society member. There is no such organization. The JBS is a front for the Trilateral Commission!

Thomas J. Ritter Jr.
Allentown, Pa.

■ Dear Mr. Buckley: Another verb denoting two separate actions: "change," as in to change currency, meaning to take some money *and* to give some back.

Stephen Conatser
Athens, Ga.

—WFB

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■ ELECTION 2000 SPECIAL ■

Who *Are* These People?

Gore's America—and ours

MARK STEYN

CREDIT where it's due. The Gore campaign turned in a phenomenal performance on Tuesday, November 7. At the time of writing, and not including the mountain of "dimpled chads" from Palm Beach, some 49,274,146 Americans voted for Al Gore. Well, okay, they're not all Americans: A not-insignificant chunk are non-Americans who, a couple of weeks before the election, received a don't-forget-to-vote-even-though-you're-not-entitled-to letter from Bill Clinton, plus a complimentary "Voter Identification Card." And another half-million or so are people who are U.S. citizens but probably shouldn't be—part of that tide of aliens Al Gore strong-armed the INS into hustling through the naturalization process without background checks before the '96 election and who subsequently turned out to have impressive criminal records. So let's remove the Uzbekistani serial killers, Colombian rapists, and Welsh pedophiles. That probably knocks Al's vote down to approximately 48,260,111. And let's discount Granny Winnie, the Federation of Scrupulously Impartial American Journalists, Greg Craig and full supporting cast, Al Sharpton's entourage, gay scoutmasters, partial-birth-abortion fetishists, the Palm Beach chapter of Jews for Buchanan, Alec Baldwin, Daniel Baldwin, Billy Baldwin, Dimpled Chad Baldwin, Swinging Chad Baldwin, Hanging Chad Baldwin, Donny and Marie Baldwin, Curly, Moe, and Larry Baldwin, and all the other Baldwins. That still leaves out of that 49,274,146 at least, oh, 30,000 regular, normal, perfectly ordinary Americans who voted for Al Gore.

Incredible. Who *are* these people? Have you ever met any of them? Even worse, if you add Ralph Nader's total to the mix, you're faced with a grim statistic: Some 52 million Americans voted left-of-center—the most ever. Their combined proportion of the vote—51 percent—is the best performance by the Left since 1964, when the Left, at least as manifested in the Democratic party, was well to the right of today's Left. In other words, the Gore/Nader turnout was spectacular. And those of us on the other side cannot escape the forlorn conclusion that the vast right-wing conspiracy isn't half as vast as we thought it was.

George W. Bush by Roman Genn

Of course, with great turnout come great problems—and great opportunities. The revelation that large numbers of Democratic voters aren't up to voting is an inevitable by-product, one would have thought, of Democratic identity-group politics, where you swing by the old-folks home and the gay bathhouse, round up your various clients, and bus them to the polls en masse, only to find that more than a few are incapable of remembering their instructions. Say what you like about The Stupid Party, at least the average conservative gun-nut can put a nice clean shot through the correct hole on his ballot from 200 yards. Nevertheless, it now seems that not to allow Democratic officials to divine voter intent retrospectively is, ipso facto, discriminatory. According to Jack Davis, "California's premier expert on hand counts," "The voting profile shows clearly that Democrats are more likely to screw up the chad than Republicans. This goes across the board by at least 1 percent." So, if we're to be fair about this, we have to acknowledge that the left-of-center vote isn't a paltry 52 million, but 52,520,000. Maybe more. Mr. Davis says "at least" 1 per cent. If he's underestimating Democratic ineptitude, the real number of Gore/Nader voters is more likely 53–54 million.

For Republicans, this is staggeringly bad news. Indeed, just about the only good news in the week after Election Day was the map published in the *New York Times*. Most newspapers use a state map to show the presidential vote, because it is, after all, the state votes that determine the Electoral College. But for some reason the *Times* chose to illustrate the vote with a county map. I'd never given counties much thought before: In my corner of New Hampshire, they don't count for much. But, if the vagaries of electoral administration in Palm Beach and Broward have taught us anything, it's that the county is clearly the crucial unit pretty much everywhere else. And, in that respect, the *Times* map was glorious: There were two clusters of blue dots on the East and West Coasts, and between them a sea of red broken only by a few more blue dots along the Mississippi. When you look at Bush counties rather than Bush states, that big Republican "L" running down the Rockies and sweeping through the South fattens out considerably, advancing westward to take in most of Washington, Oregon, and the entire interior of "liberal" California. I get around quite a bit of this great Republic in the course of the average year, and, naturally, when I saw the figures on election night, I began to wonder why I'd run into so few of these gazillions of Gore voters. But the truth is they're not indigenous to

Mr. Steyn is a columnist for Britain's *Daily Telegraph* and Canada's *National Post*.

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most of North America. It's possible to drive from Fort Dick on the Pacific coast in a more or less straight line across the continent to Ocean City, Md., without passing through a single county that voted for Gore.

Bush won, hand-counts pending, somewhere between 29 and 32 of the 50 states. But, if you add up the counties, the difference is even starker: 677 counties voted for Gore, 2,434 for Bush. The presumption among the liberal elitists is that these great coastal Goropolises are not just where all the people are but also where all the action is, and that the Bush-league counties are fading backwaters with a couple of rusting grain elevators and an abandoned sawmill. But not so: If you measure economic growth in the last decade, in Gore-voting counties it was 5 percent, in Bush-voting counties, 14 percent. At the same time, the county map also illustrates why the Democrats run a much more effective get-out-the-vote operation: The Gore counties cover 580,134 square miles, the Bush counties, 2,427,039 square miles. To get out *their* vote, the Bush team would have to cover over four times the terrain of the Gore campaign—which means you'd need four times as many Park Avenue heiresses in four times as many SUVs to offer cigarettes to the same number of people.

But the county map also illustrates the Democrats' dilemma: Their vote is concentrated in fewer places than at any time in the party's history. And that means that, as long as this country is a federation of states, the outlook isn't good for the Dems. That's one reason that, as soon as the polls closed, they began waging war on the Electoral College. Senator-elect Rodham, for example, now favors choosing the president by popular vote. And who can blame her? Nationwide direct election is the only shot the half-million square miles that vote Democratic have of imposing President Hillary on the two and a half million square miles that don't.

If there's any lesson to be drawn from this election, it's that, with the American people almost evenly divided, what this country needs is not less federalism but more. This Republic was founded on the principle that remote government is bad government, and that's truer than ever in an age when Hillary, Al, and their chums in the courts want to take us down the path to European-style centralism. One of the reasons I'm a federalist is that I believe that, in a healthy society, if you don't like things the way they are, you shouldn't have to leave the country. That's the genius of America: There's always somewhere to move to. If you live in Massachusetts and you're sick of the state sales tax and income tax, move to New Hampshire, which has neither. Conversely, if you're in one of those Bible Belt burgs where the sheriff decides to enforce the state's anti-sodomy laws by bursting in on you and your partner every Saturday night, an apartment above an old-whaling-tavern-turned-condom-boutique in Provincetown probably looks pretty good.

Majoritarian rule will deny us those choices. So, if we're going to monkey with the Electoral College, let's just fine-tune its organizing principle. When the Founders hit on their formula of state electors, most states were teensy Delaware/Rhode Island-sized affairs. As the nation spread west, the states got bigger and bigger to the point where today the average Nevada county is much closer to the Founders' conception of what a *state* ought to be. So let's switch the electoral vote from states to counties: Let's make it an Electoral County College and give the Democrats some real headaches.

Salman Rushdie, the New York-based Tony Blair supporter, wrote a column recently comparing U.S. democracy unfavorably with India's. He has a point—but then the Indian subcontinent enjoyed the immense benefit of the 1947 partition. So, if you dislike my Electoral County College idea, let's change the law on secession and encourage New York and Los Angeles and their surrounding areas to become the East and West Pakistans of North America—or perhaps, to cast it in a more attractive light, dynamic city statelets like Singapore. Let them glitter on the extremities—debauched dystopias that the rest of us can visit for wild weekends every now and again before returning to our homes in solid, enduring, conservative . . . America. **NR**

Here We Go Again

Impeachment redux

RAMESH PONNURU

THIS is beginning to feel familiar. The anchors are talking about a "constitutional crisis without precedent." You can't spit without hitting a lawyer on TV, and you frequently want to. Greg Craig is back. Dubious legal theories are being advanced. Robert Wexler is yelling and Jesse Jackson is marching. (Okay, those things are always true.) The words "illegitimacy" and "rule of law" are being tossed around. There has even been some talk about a right-wing "conspiracy," albeit this time Floridian rather than vast.

Yes, it's beginning to feel just like impeachment. The mood in Washington—amazement, barely controlled fury—is the same. Bitterness is a guaranteed outcome, just as it was then. There are, of course, important differences between the two cases. Last time around, Sean Wilentz, the Princeton history professor, was publishing pro-Clinton petitions in newspapers with the likes of C. Vann Woodward and Arthur Schlesinger Jr. Now he's publishing pro-Gore petitions in newspapers with the likes of Rosie O'Donnell. And while in 1998 and 1999 the Democrats accused Republicans of trying to "overturn the election," this time both sides are making the accusation.

But it is the similarities that impress. Even some of the arguments are the same. During the debate over impeachment, George Will remarked that at last Democrats were acting like democrats and Republicans like republicans. So it is again. Democrats are talking about the need to respect "the will of the people," pointing to Gore's apparent plurality in the national vote just as they pointed to the opinion polls supporting Clinton during impeachment. Republicans are again invoking the Constitution—or rather, a part of the Constitution that

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rarely affects anything and is little understood.

Perhaps the Republicans were, or are, wrong about the Constitution. The Democrats' argument would still be more troubling because it is anti-constitutionalist as such. It sets up an implicit rhetorical opposition between the "will of the people" and the Constitution. This opposition is pernicious. In America, the Constitution *is* the will of the people; the lasting will. "The people" announce their very existence as a polity through the Constitution (and the Declaration).

But if the Republicans have the better of the argument, they're getting the worse of the politics. As during impeachment, Democrats have been more agile. In the fall of 1998, Democrats demanded that the House set a deadline for finishing its work on impeachment, and then complained that it was rushing to judgment. They said it would be unfair not to bring Kenneth Starr up for questioning, and then said it was unfair to let him testify. Now, having prepared to make the argument for the Electoral College before the election, when it looked favorable to Gore, they have pivoted without pause. They have been faster than the Republicans: Gore was sending lawyers to Florida even before he conceded to Bush, let alone before he retracted that concession. It wasn't until two days later that Republicans began to respond to the Democrats' PR offensive. The Democrats outmaneuvered the Republicans on the matter of whether to demand manual recounts in Florida, as well.

Impeachment appears to have taught the Democrats that they can get away with anything. It has also taught them their methods. During 1998, Clinton largely withdrew from public life. His henchmen—James Carville, Paul Begala, and lesser liars—were front and center. Today Gore is being "presidential": bedecked by flags, the Constitution on his lips, mindful of the effect of political confusion on our place in the world, unwilling to entertain inappropriate questions.

■

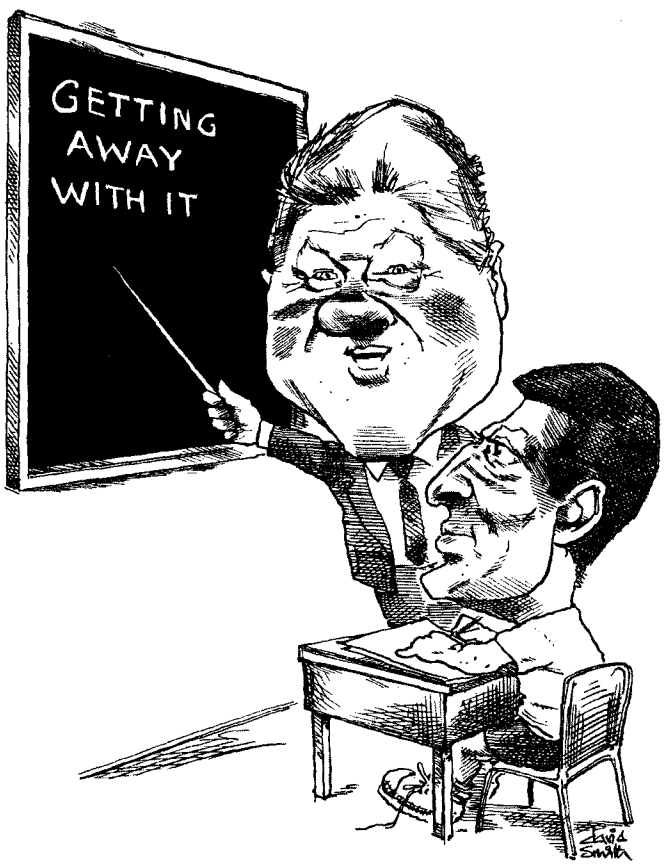
Gore and his spokesmen are using methods that would never have occurred to any pre-Clinton Democrats.

■

Bill Daley, his campaign manager, plays the role of thug, suggesting that anything other than Gore's installation as president would thwart "the will of the people." Campaign spokesman Mark Fabiani comes forward to call Florida's secretary of state Katherine Harris "a crony of the Bush brothers" and accuses her of "trying to steal this election away." This, because Harris insisted on a vote-counting deadline that is written into Florida law. (The defense of duty did not avail Kenneth Starr either.) The Gore campaign claims to have nothing to do with the various voter lawsuits filed in Florida, just as Clinton claimed to have nothing to do with lawsuits filed by his own Treasury Department.

Gore and his spokesmen have demonstrated that they want the presidency even if they lose the Electoral College, and they are contesting election results using methods—attacks on local election officials, marches—that would never have occurred to any pre-Clinton Democrats. Before Clinton, no president had so openly orchestrated a campaign, complete with propaganda and legal action, against an officer of the law. Before Gore, no presidential candidate had so openly orchestrated a campaign to steal the presidency.

Impeachment illustrated an important fact about the Democratic party: It clings to power by playing the race card. Democrats managed to racialize impeachment. Clinton was "the first black president" and the target of an attempted "lynching" by House managers. ("All they were missing was white sheets"—Eleanor Clift.) Now Jesse Jackson says that Selma has moved to Florida. Voters are being "disenfranchised." (It depends on what the meaning of "disenfranchised" is.) "It seems that in West Palm [Beach], the African-Americans and the Jewish senior citizens were targeted. Something systematic was at work here," Jackson said. "It was large and systematic." Speaking to the "sons and daughters of slavery and Holocaust survivors" in a sermon at Temple Israel of Greater Miami, the Rev. Jackson said that "we must stand together or we will perish alone."



Bill Clinton & Al Gore by David Smith

The Democrats' motives, too, are the same as they were during impeachment. Power, of course. But also sex. Impeachment was said to be "about sex" even more than about race. That was true in the sense that all of American politics has come to be about sex. Support for abortion and gay rights as aspects of sexual freedom is the emotional core of modern liberalism, just as suspicion of Big Business was the

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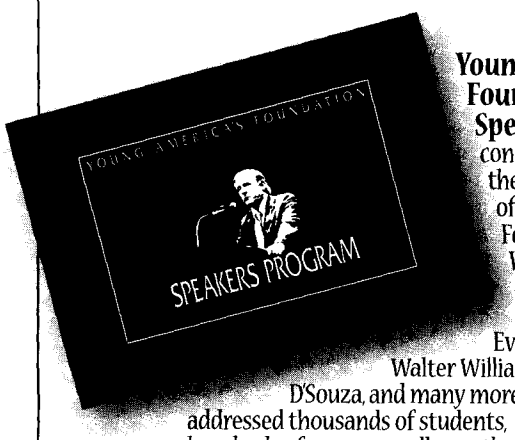

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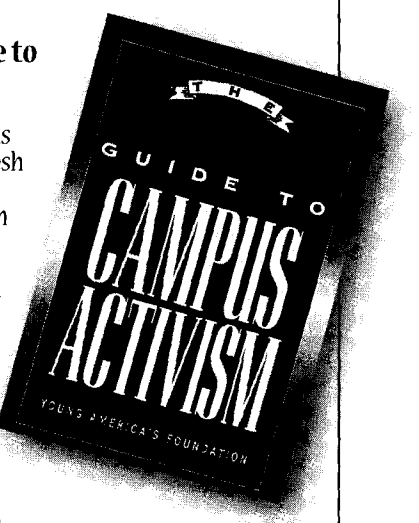

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core of an older liberalism. That is the reason that liberals hate and fear the Right and will go to such lengths to keep it out of power. They want to keep George W. Bush from appointing judges who might overturn *Roe* v. *Wade*, not from cutting taxes.

The media have acted more or less the same as they did two years ago. There have been warnings of dire consequences if Gore pushes his case too far, and even some privately expressed revulsion at his tactics. We'll see. The press is also, and typically, self-obsessed. By Day Two of the Lewinsky scandal, the media symposia on media coverage of it were already beginning. After election night, will the media take a long hard look at itself? Absolutely: just like Narcissus.

One of the crucial mistakes the Republicans made during impeachment was to treat it as a purely legal rather than political matter. They figured they would let the independent counsel slowly build his case, and eventually legal facts would trump Clintonian spin. This faith in the law proved naïve. Republicans didn't fully realize that they were in a war. The Democrats did. Republicans may be making the same mistake now.

The outcome may not, however, be the same. If Republicans can establish that Bush is the presumptive president, they can be the party that says it's time to move on while Al Gore tries to stoke popular anger at their conduct. This would be in keeping with their pre-Election Day campaigns: Bush as the uniter, Gore as the fighter. If Republicans prevail, their victory may well be Pyrrhic, as it would have been during impeachment. If they had succeeded then, Gore would have become president two years ago; if they succeed now, Bush may be a weakened president.

One final parallel between the current controversy and impeachment suggests itself. By launching the political battle to keep himself in the White House in 1998, Clinton placed his own interests above those of the nation. He demonstrated, more conclusively than in his perjuries, that he was not fit for the office in the very act of holding on to it. Al Gore is demonstrating his unfitness for the presidency right now. **NR**

The Old College Try

How we pick the prez

BYRON YORK

"I BELIEVE strongly that in a democracy we should respect the will of the people, and to me that means it's time to do away with the Electoral College," said New York senator-elect Hillary Rodham Clinton shortly after Election Day. She wasn't alone. A Gallup poll conducted a few days after the voting showed that 61 percent of Americans agree with Mrs. Clinton—a sentiment that's sure to give at least temporary new energy to the old cause of getting rid of the College. In fact, public opposition has been constant for years; in 1944, Gallup found that 65 percent of those polled wanted to do away with it.

What the polls cannot show, however, are the ways in which eliminating the Electoral College would change the nature of our political campaigns. For an idea of what those changes might be, just look at how the 2000 presidential campaign would have played out if George W. Bush and Al Gore had been trying simply to win the popular vote, rather than crafting their strategies to capture a majority in the Electoral College.

Start with the candidates' schedules. In the closing days of the campaign, Bush and Gore spent most of their precious time stumping in those famous "key battleground states"—places like Pennsylvania, Michigan, Florida, Wisconsin, and Missouri, which had enough electoral votes to attract a lot of candidate attention. In practical terms, that often meant going to relatively small cities in an effort to lock up a state's electoral votes. In early November, Gore paid visits to towns like Ames, Iowa, Las Cruces, N.M., and Huntington, W. Va., while Bush spent time in places like Duluth, Minn., Albuquerque, N.M., and Little Rock, Ark.

Would they have done that in a popular-vote system? No. The Electoral College gives smaller states a boost by awarding them electors based on their representation in Congress. Each state gets two votes to begin with, for its two senators; then, each state is given one vote for each congressional district it contains. Thus Iowa, which has five House seats, has seven electoral votes—a touch more influence than its population warrants. Those state boundaries would disappear in a popular-vote system; instead of concentrating on individual states in order to win electoral votes, candidates would focus on metropolitan areas and regions where they already have strong support as they try to build up their popular-vote totals. "Gore would probably have been in California more; he would have been in Massachusetts, he would have been all over the Northeast, and not in Michigan and Pennsylvania and Wisconsin and Missouri," says Democratic strategist Steve McMahon. "He would have been up and down the West coast and up and down the East coast, with a stop in Chicago."

At the same time, George W. Bush would have tried to run up the score on his home turf. "Bush did not push for a large turnout in Texas," says David Israelite, political director for the Republican National Committee. "If the election were based on the popular vote, I'm sure he could have generated tens of thousands or hundreds of thousands more votes there." Bush would also have spent more time in urban areas in the South and the Great Plains, which, while not having the concentration of votes found in the Northeast, are solidly Republican. And the closer the race, the stronger the temptation to stick to one's base—Ames, Iowa, could forget about seeing any presidential candidates.

A popular vote would also change the candidates' advertising strategy. In the current state-based system, the campaigns buy air time on hundreds of local television stations, concentrating on the areas that are most hotly contested

Mr. York is *The American Spectator*'s senior writer.

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and offer the most electoral votes. Those advertising campaigns are designed to dovetail with candidate visits to create the maximum combination of free and paid media. But places that each candidate has in the bag receive little or no attention. For example, viewers in the nation's two largest television markets, New York and Los Angeles, saw no commercials from the Democratic candidate. "The Gore campaign didn't communicate with them at all," says Steve McMahon. "They were wholly taken for granted because they were in the 'D' column automatically." Likewise, the Bush campaign didn't waste its money on television advertising in Dallas, Houston, and San Antonio—or New York, for that matter.

In a popular-vote system, the candidates would instead buy much more time on the national networks, both broadcast and cable. That would create a split between where the campaign poured advertising money and where the candidate actually traveled, a difference between what political professionals call the "media strategy" and the "body strategy." "The body would go to major media markets where you could meet the most people," says McMahon. "The candidate would physically appear in the top 50 markets, but his media would appear everywhere."

A switch to a popular-vote system would change much more than the style of campaigning. The issues that candidates choose to stress would also be transformed. Without the Electoral College, each candidate would likely emphasize issues important to his base in an effort to build up support from core voters. "Both Bush and Gore avoided gun control and abortion for the most part, which are defining issues of the two parties," says Michael Barone, coauthor of *The Almanac of American Politics*. "The problem was that in the target states, there is close to a balance on those issues, so you alienate as many voters as you enthuse. If it were national, Gore would be running on gun control to turn out urban voters."

Local issues would also disappear. In September, Bush traveled to Monroe, Wash., to stand in front of the Haskell Slough salmon-recovery project, which he praised as a model of local environmental-protection efforts. As with so many other issues, Gore covered some of the same territory, promising more than Bush; on his own visits to Washington, the vice president promised to convene a "Salmon Summit" devoted to increasing fish population and preserving dams on the Snake River. Would candidates chasing a majority of voters nationwide spend much time on questions like that? Probably not. "Those are issues that might be ignored in a national campaign," says David Israelite.

Finally, getting rid of the Electoral College would change the contours of the two-party system itself. If amassing the most votes were the only standard for election, it's likely we would see more third- and fourth-party candidates. "Unless you get a third candidate like Ross Perot who was competitive, and that's been rare," Barone says, "the Electoral College works very much to their disadvantage, because you always get back to the 'wasted vote' theory." Most voters don't want to throw away their votes on a candidate who can't win, and the public tends to move away from lesser candidates as Election Day approaches. They know full well that the electoral system does not reward even the strongest third-party candidate; in 1992, Perot received 19,741,048 popular votes and not a single vote in the Electoral College.

Of course, Perot was highly eccentric, to say the least, which limited his vote-getting appeal. Where a change in the system might really have an effect is with a candidate who is intensely popular with the hard-core base of one of the parties and who is able to generate high turnout in high-population areas.

Which brings the issue back to New York's senator-elect. It seems highly unlikely that Hillary Rodham Clinton could run a winning campaign for president under the Electoral College system; she would be too unpalatable to voters in the battleground states. But under a popular-vote system, one in which Mrs. Clinton could concentrate on the Northeast, the West Coast, and Chicago, she might well have a chance. Just one more reason to revere the wisdom of the Founding Fathers. **NR**

Alter-ed State

The next Sid Blumenthal?

JOHN J. MILLER

In the ninth hour of NBC's election-night broadcast—after Tom Brokaw had painted 48 of the states on his map either red for George W. Bush or blue for Al Gore, and after Tim Russert had scribbled a dozen or so Electoral College possibilities on his shiny white eraser board—guest pundit Jonathan Alter declared that such constitutional niceties didn't really matter.

"If it turns out that Al Gore wins the popular vote nationally, there will be intense pressure in this country to have him become the president. Most people think the guy with the most votes wins. The political pressure would mount quickly to certify Al Gore as the winner. Especially since you have a potential conflict of interest here with the governor of the state that is handling the recount being the brother of Governor Bush."

It was late at night, and everyone was tired. But the comment electrified the set. Brokaw was almost physically repulsed by this mini-lecture; he crossed his arms defensively and didn't even look at Alter, who was sitting just to his left. Russert pounced. "I don't know a constitutional expert who would agree with that, Tom," he said. "I mean, everyone said straight out, 'Whoever wins 270 votes in the Electoral College is the next president of the United States.'" Brokaw agreed: "If you had a clear-cut constitutional rule that everyone understood when they began the campaign, the time to change it would be after the election." Yet in that moment, as his seniors smacked him down, Alter laid out what has become Gore's postelection strategy: denigrating an outcome in which Bush wins by the rules but not by a popular vote. Alter was on-message, even before there was a message to be on.

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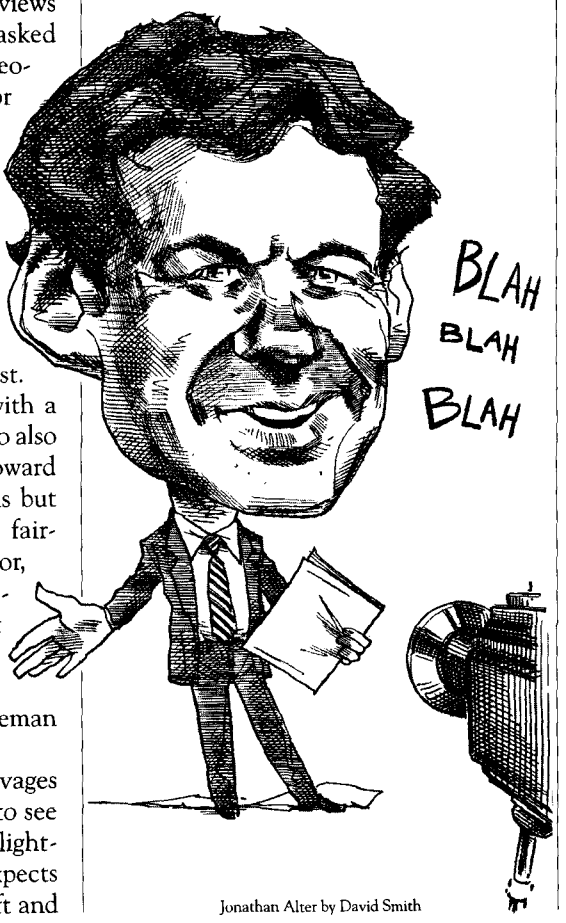
He's been like that through the whole presidential campaign. Political reporters are one of the Democrats' most reliable constituencies; the fact that Alter, who splits his time between *Newsweek* and NBC, is rather partisan is hardly news. But it must be said that even a figure like George Stephanopoulos, who went from the Clinton administration to ABC, strives for objectivity and probably isn't aware of the biases conservatives routinely detect in him. With Alter, it's different: He is aware, and he's clever about burying them in an aura of impartiality. It's almost as if he were auditioning for the role of Sidney Blumenthal in a Gore administration.

Alter was destined for liberal greatness from the start. He comes from Chicago, where his mother was a Democratic officeholder in Cook County, and attended Harvard, where he was political editor of the *Crimson*. He wrote speeches for Jimmy Carter and toiled for Ralph Nader. *Newsweek* snatched him up in 1983. He writes mainly about politics, but he has made forays elsewhere, including a string of celebrity interviews for *USA Weekend*. (In 1996, he asked Madonna, "The kinds of things people want to know are basic. For instance: Are you going to breast-feed?")

Politics remains his bread and butter, and he won his NBC perch because of his work at *Newsweek*. He's not an especially attractive television personality: He rarely smiles, and the one emotion he seems capable of expressing is angst. He does not compare favorably with a pair of his *Newsweek* colleagues who also spend of lot of time on camera: Howard Fineman, who has his enthusiasms but normally can be counted on for fair-mindedness and a touch of humor, and Eleanor Clift, who lacks Fineman's detachment but is forthright about her status as a partisan role-player. The problem with Alter is that he combines the style of Fineman with the substance of Clift.

In his *Newsweek* column, he savages Bush almost every week. "I'd like to see the Democrats attack Bush as a lightweight in hock to polluters who expects the Oval Office as a graduation gift and wouldn't know enough as president to settle the inevitable differences among his advisers," he wrote in September. He *seems* to go after Gore, too; but actually, his attacks on him are never really attacks. They're like listening to someone during a job interview answering a question about personal weaknesses with an underhanded tribute to his own strengths. In Alter's view, Gore's troubles are cosmetic. The vice president is "a man of convictions who somehow makes people think he has none; a politician who acts more fake than he really is." In another column, following more of this gentle criticism, Alter noted, "Gore is at least using his head to try to figure out where the country and the world are going." (Guess who isn't?)

And he defends Gore vigorously when he must. In October, Alter devoted a whole page to Gore's reputation for lying. He started out by suggesting that all politicians lie—taking issue, specifically, with Dick Cheney's debate laugh line about the government having "absolutely nothing to do with" his private-sector success (anybody who heads a company that wins federal contracts is apparently a ward of the state). Then he tried to debunk a few of Gore's lesser fibs, without bothering to confront the most flamboyant ones.



Jonathan Alter by David Smith

Usually, Alter goes on offense. Those concerns about Gore's honesty? They're "GOP slurs" that "created the phony impression" that Gore ought to sip truth serum before speaking publicly. Alter loves nothing more than clocking Bush. The governor, he has written, "is neither brilliant nor hardworking." He is "Clintonian." His "presidency will be essentially subcontracted to exactly those corporate interests that Naderites believe are threatening our democracy." He considers it especially revealing that Bush has not gone on several grand tours of the Old World. "Bush has traveled overseas only three times in his 54 years. Mexico is the only foreign country he has visited often and knows well," he wrote in October. Three weeks later, he felt the need to say exactly the same thing, reminding readers that "until recently, Mexico was the only country outside the United States that seemed to engage his interest; he has visited the Middle East once, in 1998 (one of only three trips he has taken overseas in his life)." He has made this point on television, too.

One of the major themes he's developed about the election this year is that voters like Bush personally but prefer Gore's ideas. This is about as unwise as conventional wisdom gets—it doesn't account for the fact that voters say they prefer Gore on Social Security, but also prefer Bush's partial-privatization approach when it's explained to them.

Before Election Day, there was a moment when it seemed possible that Bush and Gore might find themselves in the opposite position from the one they now appear to be in. Alter said, on the October 20 *Today Show*, that "we could have a situation where Bush wins the popular vote and Gore wins in the Electoral College." One week later, Alter was back on the air, explaining, "As many Americans know, the person with the most votes doesn't necessarily win. The election is decided by the Electoral College."

Yes, it is, except when Jonathan Alter decides it isn't. **NR**

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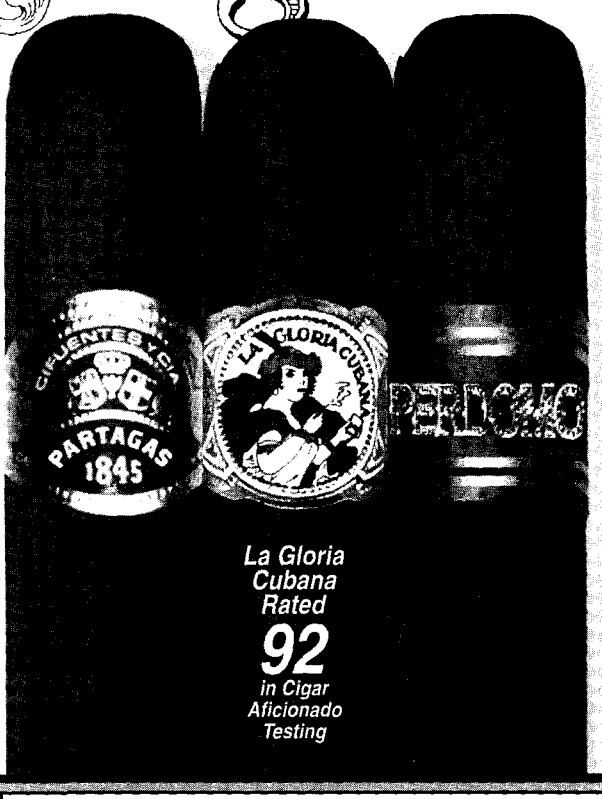

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The Worst Democrat

Jesse Jackson again—and again

JONAH GOLDBERG

"THIS is a replay of Selma, Alabama, all over again," Jesse Jackson said. Holocaust survivors have been disenfranchised, he lamented in front of any camera he could find. The fact that a few minorities and a passel of old Jewish ladies double-punched some ballots—which had been printed in large, old-folks-friendly type—was, to Jackson, an obvious extension of the "blood of blacks and Jews" spilled in 1965. Blacks were "discouraged" from voting in this election, Jackson asserted with the level of conviction only people untroubled by facts can muster.

And yet *New York Times* reporter Lynette Holloway, even after cataloguing such statements, can write: "Mr. Jackson has been careful not to be inflammatory, which may be one reason the Democratic National Committee has changed its mind about his involvement." This raises the intriguing question of what could possibly pass for "inflammatory" to either the *New York Times* or the Democratic National Committee. After all, one might think repeated and forthright declarations and suggestions that elderly Jews were "targeted" for "disenfranchisement" because of their status as Holocaust survivors isn't the most helpful course to take.

Many old people were confused by the Palm Beach ballot only *after* they voted. Jackson, with the approval of the Gore campaign, successfully translated what amounted to a vague sense on the part of some voters that they might have read the ballot wrong into a full-blown racist and anti-Semitic electoral pogrom.

"Once again, the sons and daughters of slavery and Holocaust survivors are bound together by their hopes and their fear about national public policy," Jackson said, leaving little room for principled compromise. Besides, he explained to the press, "the African-Americans and the Jewish senior citizens [of Palm Beach] were targeted." He later added, "Something systematic was at work here. . . . It was large and systematic."

Liberal commentator Bill Press said on CNN's *Spin Room* that Jackson's comparisons of Palm Beach to Selma were "over the top." But among media heavyweights, Press appears all but alone in that assessment. Receiving the sort of reserved treatment normally afforded to distinguished statesmen, Jackson has been ubiquitous on cable news shows and on the scene in Palm Beach. In the first day or two of this postelection campaign, he exhorted people to bring forward complaints about the Florida vote. He's held umpteen press conferences. He's sought to answer every pressing question of the current political crisis—except one: Who the hell does he think he is?

Everyone knows that Jackson holds no public office, and has no obvious connection to Florida. He may have considerable moral authority with his base, but he has exceedingly little outside it. Even if he weren't needlessly playing on the passions and fears of blacks and Holocaust survivors, it's far from clear that he could do any good in this situation even if he were inclined to. In fact, he is up to no good.

Which seems to have become his favorite pastime. Last winter, Jackson took a public-relations pasting for parachuting into a local school-board decision in Decatur, Ill. Six students received two-year expulsions for initiating a wilding-like brawl at a college football game. Jackson, *before* he saw a videotape of the fight, dismissed it as "something silly, like children do." City councilwoman Betsy Stockard, who is black, agreed, believing the punishment too harsh. After Stockard saw the tape, she changed her mind. "I realized this was not a simple kids' fight," Stockard told the *Los Angeles Times*. "I had to support their expulsion. This was a horrendous brawl. This was scary." Jackson took exactly the opposite approach, calling in his squad of rent-a-rioters and ratcheting up the racial rhetoric, invoking time and again the memory of Selma.

The following summer, he again spent weeks holding press conferences, vigils, and marches, this time in Mississippi. He hoped his public-relations alchemy could transform the suicide of a young black man into a lynching. Without a shred of evidence, and in the face of two separate autopsies—one done for the family—that concluded that 17-year-old Raynard Johnson killed himself, Jackson denounced local and state officials and helped delude the Johnson family into believing that their son was a martyr in the cause of hate-crimes legislation. Jackson forced a federal investigation by the Reno Justice Department; it continues today. The press—especially TV—gave Jackson's entirely unsubstantiated fabrications ample and somber play. Here, too, Jackson found the "blood" of Selma.

In fact, it seems clear now that Jackson simply has Selma on the brain. As pointed out by John Miller and Ramesh Ponnuru on National Review Online, Jackson is almost incapable of not referring to Selma. Last year, after an accidental police shooting, Jackson found Selma in the streets of Riverside, Calif. This March, Jackson invoked Selma again, to defend two race-preference programs in Houston. And of course, how could Jackson denounce the shooting of Amadou Diallo without reminding people that in Selma "the people were as innocent as Amadou Diallo, but they were beaten with sticks, hit with horses—blood was spilled."

So it should be no surprise that on arriving in Florida, Jackson noted that "this is a replay of Selma, Alabama, all over again." But what does surprise is that anyone is listening to Jackson anymore. Consider Jackson's actual argument. He claims that 19,000 people were disenfranchised because a ballot—designed by a Democrat, with large type for old folks—had arrows pointing directly to the appropriate holes. Now, the word "disenfranchise" actually holds two problems for Jackson. The first is that it is difficult to find a rhyme for it.

Second, it is, quite simply, a transitive verb. To disenfranchise (disfranchise is the more accurate word) means to take

Mr. Goldberg is editor of National Review Online (www.nationalreview.com).

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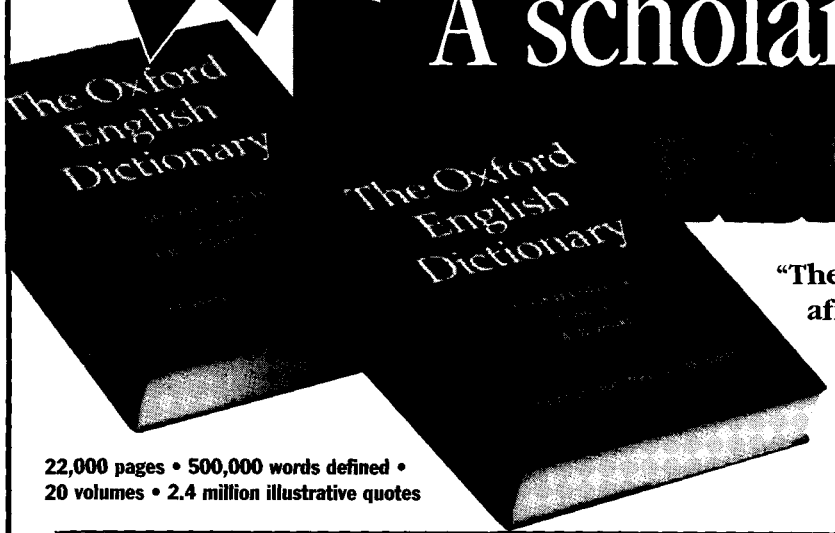

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away or deny someone's right or privilege. Yes, in Selma, in 1965, African-Americans were hideously denied their right to vote. But it is hard to see how all of the people who voted twice in Palm Beach can claim they were denied the right to vote. A population disproportionately well versed in filling out bingo cards and racing forms cannot easily claim that their vote was denied to them when some 96 percent of their fellow county residents were sharp enough to decipher the system. If you pick five of six numbers correctly on a lotto ticket, it is a stretch to claim that when you missed the sixth, the state denied you some right. The fact that the powers that be in Palm Beach—as opposed to Selma—very much wanted every vote to count seems to muddy the analogy even more. And nowhere in any of this are agents of the state beating would-be voters with nightsticks.

All of this is surely beside the point, because Jackson is entirely uninterested in arguing the case on its merits. His aim is to muddy the waters in Florida for any Republican victory, and thus expand his *own* franchise in the Democratic party. After a Jackson-led rally in Miami, one typically fired-up attendee told the press, "I think it's a conspiracy, I really do." Of course she does. Because Jackson hurls numerous accusations about racial intimidation at the polls, without having to provide any evidence for those allegations. In fact, black voting was at a record high, and disproportionate to black numbers in the population—hardly a sign that mass intimidation took place.

Jackson has the media cowed. They give him a free ride as he goes around fomenting the notion that evil and "systematic" conspiracies abound in the U.S. In the case of his current high jinks, even the Gore campaign doesn't actually try to corroborate his claims; they just parrot that there were many "disturbing irregularities" in the Florida balloting. ("Disturbing irregularities" is, of course, a euphemism for "any factors, albeit entirely legal and legitimate ones, that resulted in Democrats losing.") About the vague allegations that minorities were dissuaded from voting, Tom Nides of the Gore campaign told *USA Today* simply, "Jesse Jackson is on top of that." **NR**

Take This Job . . . Please

The unlucky winner

JOHN O'SULLIVAN

"It may be a blessing in disguise," Lady Churchill famously said to her husband in 1945 when the British voters unceremoniously threw him out of power on the very morrow of victory. Churchill growled in reply that at the moment it was in very effective disguise indeed. But Clemmie was right: Electoral defeat brought many advantages. Churchill was given six years to write his incomparable war memoirs. The Labour government, led by men honorably exhausted from holding wartime office, had to struggle with Britain's straitened postwar economic circumstances at a time when the people expected the fruits of victory. The Tories were granted the opportunity to refresh their thinking and their image (a false but powerful one of prewar hardheartedness). And within six years, defeat had been succeeded by victory—and 13 affluent Tory years.

Lady Churchill had, perhaps without realizing it, taken the long view. Of course, such reflections are only possible in retrospect. A political party must always fight for office in the more or less genuine conviction that its triumph will be the salvation of the country and that of its rival a national catastrophe. It cannot plan to lose today in order to win tomorrow. Not only do such schemes of mice and men gang aft a-gley; they are probably also a sign of weak will and feeble commitment (a curse in disguise, so to speak). Politicians worthy of the name want office as soon as practically possible.

If most Republicans feel such a healthy desire—and after eight years of Bill Clinton in the White House, it would be odd if they did not—it is probably accompanied at the time of writing by even more elemental passions: a gnawing anxiety that the election is being stolen from them; a fierce resentment that this obvious perception is not universally shared; a dread that there is nothing they can do about it. On that last point, they are indubitably correct. Like so many other political decisions in modern America, it is judges who will have the final say on whether George W. Bush or Albert Gore becomes the next president.

While all Americans await the verdict of our new masters, however, it might be a useful therapeutic exercise for Republicans (and a prophylactic against disappointment) to consider the possibility that an Al Gore victory would be a blessing in disguise—in very effective disguise, to be sure—for the GOP.

That mental exercise must begin with an admission: The election result was a huge letdown for the Right. To begin with, the popular vote was almost evenly split between the two candidates. Even if Bush finally ekes out a narrow victory there, as well as in Florida, it will give him the minimum of political authority in his dealings with Congress and the media. If Gore retains a popular-vote lead, of course, the Democrats will spend the next four years stressing the illegitimacy of his presidency, just as they incessantly attributed his father's presidency to Willie Horton.

The situation is only marginally better in the House and Senate. Republican majorities there are so narrow that almost no controversial Republican measure (or judicial appointee) will have any prospect of approval. With Bush in the White House, there would be a façade of Republican power: The two political branches of government would be controlled by the GOP. But the reality would be a mixture of gridlock and bipartisanship. Bush would inevitably disappoint his supporters; the GOP would take the blame for anything that went wrong; and the Democrats would enjoy power without responsibility. It is a melancholy prospect.

So the first Republican advantage of a Democratic victory would be that Gore would face this sea of troubles. Indeed, he would dispose of even less political authority than a President Bush because his party would be in an actual minority in both chambers. And in the bitter post-Florida atmosphere that is likely to prevail, he would be unable to pass any

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measure of which the GOP did not approve. Most of his presidential activity would come down to vetoing legislation.

Admittedly, he would have the excuse, unavailable to Bush, that any failure was the fault of the party that controlled Congress. But that would be a poor substitute for real power (for which political men drain even the poisoned chalice of office in war and depression). Lacking Clinton's smooth skills, Gore would be less able in any event to turn the public's discontent against Capitol Hill. His possession of the White House would probably enable the GOP to salvage its control of Congress in 2002. And after a further two years, he would face an election in which a main topic of debate would be whether he had stolen the first election.

None of these speculations depend upon things going wrong in the real world. Yet when British prime minister Harold Macmillan was asked what had been the dominant force in his administration, he replied: "Events, dear boy, events."

The main events that people are now expecting to dominate the next four years are a stock market "correction" and a recession. Both look overdue. By most historical standards the valuations in the stock market are very high (even though they have come down a little from their peak). America has also enjoyed an economic boom for all but nine months of the last 18 years—an exceptionally long time as booms go. The bears are not only more numerous, they are also more bearish, noting grimly that the Japanese recession is only now ending after a run of ten years. And Gore is exactly the sort of president who is usually around when a recession starts: Like Herbert Hoover, he is serious, rigid, convinced of his rectitude, and enthusiastic for state intervention. No wonder the markets have reacted inversely to the rise and fall of his prospects in the postelection election.

The political consequences of a bust after people had become accustomed to the idea of endless prosperity are hard to overestimate. But it would certainly cast a gloomy backward shadow over the past eight years if the surplus were to vanish and the bills for overspending come due. Republicans would claim, falsely but plausibly, that the Clinton boom had been a house built on sand; Clintonian Democrats would regret that their centrist hero had been succeeded by a rigid ideologue who failed to understand the markets; and Naderite Democrats (suddenly far more numerous) would decry a Democratic president who had lost both the world and his soul.

All other political events, with the unlikely exception of a major war, would be trivial in comparison to a prolonged economic downturn. It would flavor every other policy and color the government's overall reputation. It is more likely than not. And it is just possible that it would coincide with a massive upheaval in American politics of which we have heard rumbling subterranean warnings in the last ten years.

It is an odd and slightly eerie fact that since the disputed election of John Quincy Adams in 1824 that led to the rise of Jacksonian democracy, American politics has experienced turbulent political upheavals, amounting nearly to a change of system, almost precisely every 36 years. After 1824 came the Republican victory in 1860 and the Civil War (1861); after the McKinley–Bryan election of 1896, the radicals took over the Democratic party and set rural against urban America; 1932 brought the FDR and the New Deal; the 1968 election saw the Sixties revolution and the emerging Republican majority. On this timetable, the nation's next rendezvous with destiny is set for 2004.

Al Gore by Roman Genn

Do not be alarmed: This is not numerology on the lines of a Farrakhan speech. This pattern has, as they say, a perfectly reasonable explanation. As James Chapin, a political analyst with United Press International, points out, it suggests a generational influence on the political system. Each generation establishes a political system responsive to its own concerns (though disguised as a continuing Republican–Democratic slugfest). That pattern gradually ceases to reflect the concerns of the electorate as a new generation takes over. There are periodic outbursts, protests, third-party successes, etc.—for instance, Ross Perot, Pat Buchanan, John McCain, and Ralph Nader—as the new system struggles to be born. And eventually—1824, 1860, 1896, 1932, 1968—a crisis occurs. In those circumstances it is usually fatal to be in government, since you get blamed for the crisis, and invariably better to be in opposition, since you have greater freedom of maneuver. If Gore were in the White House, it would be inevitably fatal.

If that scenario smacks too much of political fantasy for your taste, consider this final point. Gore would enter the White House under a cloud of suspicion. He may even have lost the popular vote when the final tally, including about a million overseas votes, has been reached. Even if he scrapes by in the popular count, the postelection events have given both candidates an aura of illegitimacy similar to that borne by the three earlier presidents—John Quincy Adams, Rutherford B. Hayes, and Benjamin Harrison—who won the office while losing the popular vote.

All three served only one term. Hayes did not seek a second term, and both Adams and Harrison were defeated four years later: all in all, a grim prognosis for a Gore presidency. One only hopes that Republicans will not be too disappointed if Bush wins. **NR**

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It's the ZIP Code, Stupid

The key to the American mind

KATE O'BEIRNE

VOTERS frustrated with the chaotic result of the closest presidential election in over a century have only themselves to blame. As Fred Siegel, a professor at Cooper Union College in Brooklyn and senior fellow at the Progressive Policy Institute, puts it, "America is as deeply divided as a country almost completely contented with itself can be." The divisions correlate neatly with where we live, how we live, and whom we live with.

Who would have thought it? After the campaigns pored over all the polling cross-tabs to guide their strategy, after all those focus groups devoted to divining the minds of the voters, after hundreds of millions of dollars spent on carefully calibrated political ads, it turns out that the most reliable predictor of our voting behavior is . . . our ZIP code. Al Gore carried voters in our largest cities by a three-to-one margin. In cities with populations between 50,000 and 500,000, Gore's margin was three to two. The suburbs split evenly between the candidates, and Bush carried smaller towns and rural areas with 60 percent of the vote.

This geographic divide reflects a cultural split over the role of government. Government subsidies and mediation are valued in the cities, while in areas less densely populated, government is viewed as a remote force best kept at arm's length. These geographic differences leave the electorate evenly divided: Forty percent of voters live in the suburbs, and the rest of the electorate is split evenly between large cities and small-town/rural areas. This is, in part, good news for Republicans, because the fastest-growing areas in the country are outside our cities. On the other hand, as density increases outside city limits (as in, for example, the environs of Phoenix, Ariz.), these areas lean Democratic.

These geographic differences are reinforced by lifestyle differences. Bush carried married voters by 9 points, while single voters backed Gore by a margin of 19 points. Parents with minor children gave Bush a 7-point advantage over Gore. Overall, 72 percent of Republican voters are married, compared with 59 percent of Democratic voters. Married voters are less likely to be city-dwellers. In Seattle, for example, married couples with children make up only 12 percent of the population. With urban life increasingly resembling a scene from *Swingers* or *Sex in the City*, and married families seeking the schools and open spaces of suburbs and small towns, marital status tracks with geographic location.

■

The governor won the Social Security debate as well as the argument over taxes.

■

There is a similar division with respect to religious observance. About half of all Republicans attend church at least once a week; nearly half of Democrats go to church services seldom or never. Here again, family status and geography reinforce the differences. Married couples and people who live in rural areas are more likely to attend church regularly. It seems, as Siegel argues, that people's lifestyle determines their ideology. Thus, married folk in the countryside who attend church have more conservative views on abortion, gun ownership, gay rights, and the role of government.

The exit polls provide some guidance on the effectiveness of the candidates' strategies in their attempt to appeal to the divided electorate. Bush won 80 percent of those whose chief concern was that the president be "honest and trustworthy," but an equal number of voters cared most about experience and command of the issues—and these voters supported Gore overwhelmingly. So "personality" issues proved roughly a wash, but Bush did score points on leadership qualities: By a two-to-one margin, voters saw him as a strong leader.

The top issue of concern to voters was the economy and jobs (18 percent), followed by education (15 percent), with taxes and Social Security tied for third place (14 percent). Sixty percent of economy voters backed Gore, and 80 percent of tax voters supported Bush. The governor clearly would have helped himself with an economic-growth message tied to his tax-cut plan. Gore had an 8-point advantage on education, and an 18-point advantage on Social Security. But even as Bush lost voters who cared most about Social Security, there is evidence that the governor won the Social Security debate as well as the argument over taxes: By a margin of 18 points, voters favored Bush's plan for personal Social Security investment accounts, and a majority of all voters preferred across-the-board tax relief to targeted tax cuts.

Bush actually won the two voter groups that were expected to pick the presidential winner—white Catholic voters (by 7 points) and independents (barely). The gender gap, however, is now a permanent feature of presidential elections: Men gave Bush an 11-point margin, while women gave the same margin to Gore. This gap is not actually as hopeless for the GOP as it might appear, because black women vote overwhelmingly for Democrats and thus skew the overall women's vote. But this year, Bush received only a 1-point advantage among white women—which surprised American Enterprise Institute polling expert Karlyn Bowman. Almost 60 percent of working women supported Gore, she points out, but the number of women who don't work outside the home should have been expected to support Bush by more than the 8-point margin they gave him.

With the result of this year's race still unknown, there will be millions of unhappy voters regardless of the outcome. Here, too, the public is evenly divided. Exit polls found that 47 percent of voters would be "concerned or scared" if Bush won, and 50 percent would react that way to a Gore win. The ultimate Florida vote total will find either nervous married people praying for peace of mind in country churches, or single city-dwellers seeking solace in neighborhood bars. The same number, of course, in either case. NR

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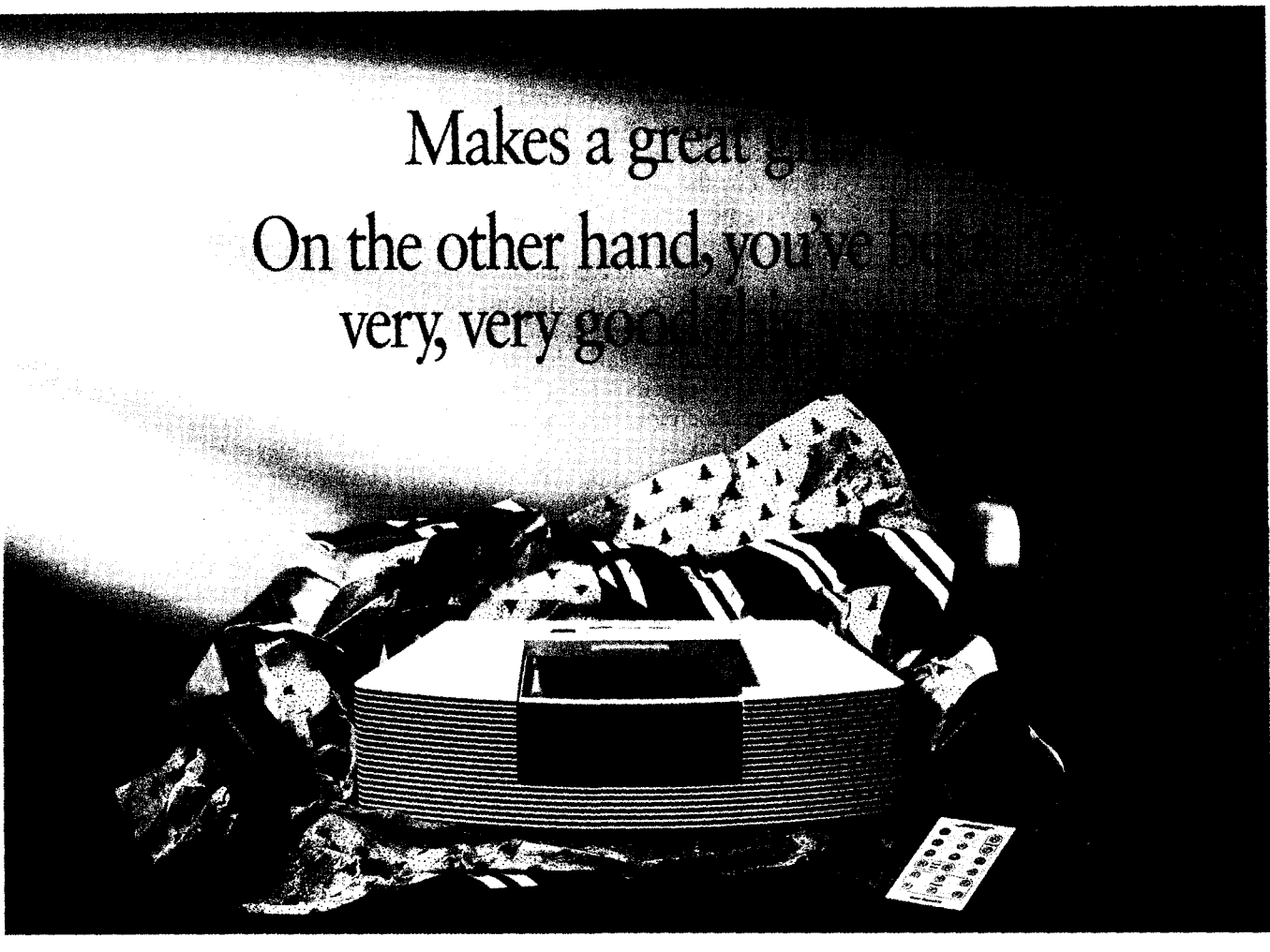

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Voters and Victims

How blacks lost—no matter what

TAMAR JACOBY

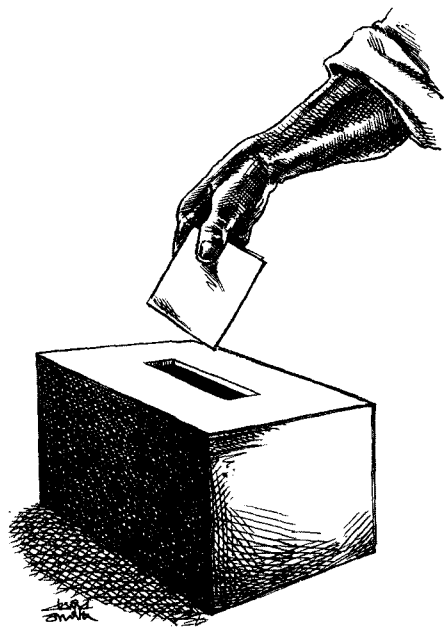
If you closed your eyes in some parts of Florida in the days following the election, it wasn't hard to imagine that it was still the '60s. According to Jesse Jackson and the NAACP, nothing important has changed since the civil-rights era. They still see a government conspiracy determined to keep blacks down by "suppressing" their votes. "The right to vote came out of Selma in blood," said Jackson. "We can't afford to lose a franchise."

This tone is nothing new. It is how the Democratic campaign has sounded all year in black America. If it now seems a little ominous to Bush supporters, it has been doing damage—insidious and lasting damage—in the black community for some time now.

In truth, of course, neither Florida nor the rest of America looks anything like the '60s as far as race is concerned. The black middle class has quadrupled since then. Three times as many blacks graduate from college. The number of black elected officials has skyrocketed from under a hundred to nearly 9,000, and blacks are one of the most powerful constituencies—if not *the* most powerful—in the Democratic party. Not surprisingly, these facts are now reflected in the way both parties vie for the black vote, and this year, even more than in the past, both sides mounted Herculean efforts.

The Democratic push was the more expensive and showy of the two. There were ads in black newspapers and on black radio stations. In Texas alone, the party sent out a million pieces of racially targeted mail and telephoned another million registered blacks with tailored messages. Jackson had his own plane, supplied by the party, and according to insiders, his schedule was second in importance only to the candidate's own: He was that busy and committed. Even the shooed-aside Bill Clinton was allowed to pitch in on this, making trips to predominantly black districts and recording 70 different phone messages that were then piped into the homes of potential black voters.

All of this was supplemented by the NAACP's get-out-the-vote effort, "Operation Big Vote," which was ostensibly nonpartisan but seen by many as a $9 million soft-money contribution to the Gore campaign. Paid staffers and volunteers scoured the country for black



voters, targeting the unregistered in shopping malls, nightclubs, black churches, even southern prisons, where they harvested some 11,000. As the election approached, the NAACP's army manned telephone banks and knocked on doors; messages urging blacks to get to the polls aired on BET and in Magic Johnson Theaters. All of this was pretty much business as usual—except on a new scale. What wasn't so conventional were the NAACP's widely aired "issue ads," which didn't exactly say, but left little doubt about whom the organization thought blacks should vote for.

Also new this year, the Republican party joined in—big time. The GOP spent $1 million on issue spots that aired exclusively on black radio, and Bush backed up his claim that he was "a different kind of Republican" by reaching out to civil-rights groups like CORE and even the NAACP.

All of this, according to David Bositis of the nonpartisan Joint Center for Political and Economic Studies, amounted to the largest and most expensive effort ever to reach out to black voters, with at least ten times as much money spent this year as in any previous campaign season.

The results were dramatic, if largely unnoticed in the tumult that followed the election. Nationally, black turnout was about what it was last time: 10 percent of the total vote (that's compared with blacks' 13 percent of the population). But blacks' enthusiasm for Gore outstripped even their historic outpourings for Clinton: Gore took 90 percent of the black vote, compared with Clinton's 84 percent last time. Black votes made the difference in several key states: Michigan, Pennsylvania, and Maryland—all of which Bush would have won if only whites had voted—and, it may turn out, in Florida, where Bush also won the white vote, by *something like 55 to 41 percent*. Black turnout in these closely contested races was unprecedented and overwhelmingly Democratic. "Bush made no inroads at all," independent pollster John Zogby declared the day after the election—if anything, an understatement. In recent decades, only Goldwater did worse, with 4 percent of the black vote to Bush's 8 percent.

What accounts for this lopsided rout? Issues and circumstances hold some clue. Jeb Bush's "One Florida" plan to replace racial preferences had alienated blacks in Florida and elsewhere. So did George W. Bush's stand on the Confederate flag and his appearance at Bob Jones University. Voters saw bigotry in his support for the death penalty. Paradoxically, among blacks, the Clinton impeachment, too, helped Gore: As much as anything Clinton said or did, it was what many blacks saw as his "lynching" by conservative whites that endeared him to them. (As Toni Morrison claimed unforgettably, this effectively made him black.) But even more than

Tamar Jacoby, a senior fellow of the Manhattan Institute, is author of *Someone Else's House: America's Unfinished Struggle for Integration*.

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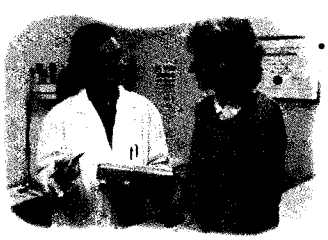

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these campaign themes, what brought blacks to vote Democratic was their image of themselves as victims—an image that the Gore campaign played on even more shamelessly than previous Democrats.

Consider the campaign's oratory and the ads it ran in the black community. Racial profiling was a key issue—with black-on-black crime never mentioned. Hate-crimes legislation was another. When talking about the Confederate flag, Gore tried to imply that Bush had a soft spot for slavery. At the bitter end of the campaign, the vice president insinuated that his opponent was intent on rolling back black citizenship. "When my opponent, Governor Bush, says he'll appoint strict constructionists to the Supreme Court," Gore mused, "I often think of the strictly constructed meaning that was applied when the Constitution was written—how some people were considered three-fifths of a human being." One NAACP spot featured vintage footage of the civil-rights struggle—as if Bush were going to bring back police dogs and water hoses. And both the party and the NAACP made prominent use of the family of James Byrd, the black man lynched in Texas in 1998: In a taped ad and at rallies, the family members implied that Bush had somehow condoned that hideous murder.

Occasionally, of course, even before black audiences, Democrats had to make *some* mention of real issues—as opposed to symbolic ones—but they too were used mainly to make Republicans look like bogeymen: tools of Big Oil and Big Drug Companies, southern conservatives out to take things from the little guy.

In almost everything they did or said, Democrats encouraged blacks to think that whites were responsible for their problems. Gore played brazenly to the conventional black view that the politics of race are a matter of good and evil (the vice president actually used that language)—not a choice between two different visions of how to handle issues like poverty and opportunity, but rather a contest between people of goodwill (invariably liberals) and villainous racists (always conservative). Rather than spur black effort and black responsibility, the campaign only encouraged blacks to believe that they always will be victims—encouraged them to go on flailing at white America and voting for Democrats to protect them from it.

In contrast, Bush and the Republican National Committee tried to appeal to blacks on the issues, addressing bread-and-butter problems and offering practical solutions. True, blacks were rarely a top priority, and spokesmen sometimes suffered from a tin ear. But GOP ads focused on initiatives like school choice and tax cuts for inner-city entrepreneurs—policies that would actually help blacks, as opposed to merely making them feel better, as hate-crimes legislation and more affirmative action might or might not do. Bush's education proposals and the passion with which he argued for them seemed tailor-made to appeal to poor black voters, who support school choice in overwhelming majorities. Of all the challenges facing blacks, none is more important than closing the education gap. But these Bush ideas fell on deaf ears in a community more interested in hearing the old Manichean catechism.

The horror is that Democrats' symbolic, emotional politics worked, and so, destructive as they are both for blacks and the country as a whole, we are sure to see more of them in the next campaign and for years to come. This will exact a huge cost. What some black scholars label "victimology" and others call the "racism-forever view" is deeply engrained in the black community. Indeed, in the last 30 years, it has become the bedrock of black identity. But it could not flourish or, in the long run, survive if it were not fueled by whites—whites like those Democratic politicians who pander to black paranoia for their own advantage. Skeptical Republicans who now repudiate Bush's black outreach are probably right in a narrow sense: There's no short-term party advantage in following his course. But in the long run, there can be little hope of moving forward on race unless enlightened blacks and whites come together to combat the poisonous attitudes that lie behind so much black failure. Unfortunately, that is not the lesson this election teaches, and whatever the outcome, when it's finally decided, one thing is already clear: For all its growing political muscle, black America lost. **NR**

Portfolio Politics

Nudging the investor class forward

RICHARD NADLER

GEORGE W. BUSH won a majority of investors' votes on November 7. The Portrait of America exit poll found that Americans owning more than $5,000 in stocks, bonds, and mutual funds preferred Bush to Al Gore by 51 percent to 45 percent. This group includes *fully one-half* of Americans, and it means that 3 million more shareholders supported Bush than supported Gore.

This impressive margin failed to overwhelm the Democratic-party strategy of Balkanization and fear-mongering. In Florida, black turnout, spurred by scurrilous race ads, increased from 527,000 in 1996 to 952,000 this year. Ninety-three percent of those extra 425,000 votes went to Gore.

Clearly, the growth of an "investor class" is no substitute for other political work. But the GOP needs to nurture the movement toward worker capitalism. An October poll conducted by Zogby International for the American Shareholders Association (ASA) confirms that mass ownership of financial assets has midwifed a new birth of free-market opinion. The influx of new investors—2.5 million per year over the past decade—yields both immediate and long-lasting political dividends for the GOP.

"When a wage worker enters the investor class through a work-based 401(k)," said ASA president Grover Norquist, "his opinions on vouchers, free trade, and entitlement privatization are no likelier to change overnight than his party affiliation. But as his plan assets grow, so do his expectations for their performance. He may at first study

Mr. Nadler is editor of *K.C. Jones*, a Midwestern journal of opinion.

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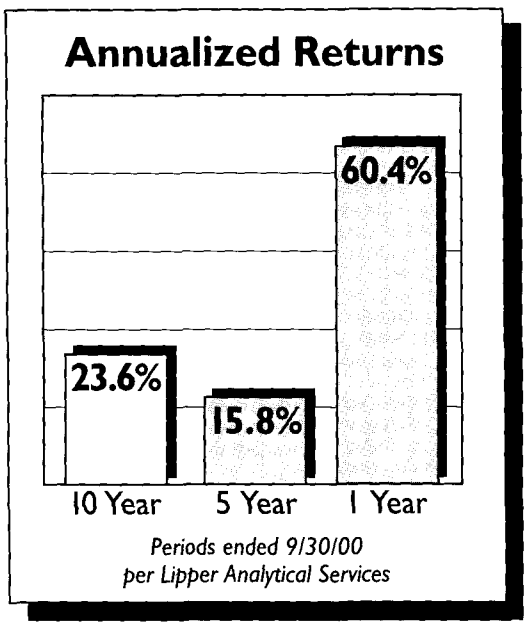

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nothing more than the plan materials his employer provides. But over time, he actively seeks sources of information that will maximize his efficiency in his new vocation: that of a capitalist. It is this pursuit that changes his opinions on a variety of partisan and policy questions to favor market-based solutions and their political advocates."

The Zogby survey contains the first hard data on this transformation: It confirms that America is already a nation of capitalists. Seventy-eight percent of Americans own stocks, bonds, or mutual funds; and as their portfolio size and market experience increase, their opinions shift markedly. Only 17 percent of "new" 401(k) plan workers—enrolled for 12 months or less—affiliate with the Republican party; 47 percent call themselves Democrats. A young worker starts his 401(k) account not because he identifies with the political Right, but because he wants to save for retirement. Yet by deferring some consumption in favor of savings and investment, he has in fact become a capitalist. The return on his broad-based mutual funds will depend on policy decisions that unite him with more experienced capitalists, whose interests may differ from his more in quantity than in kind. And to the extent that his portfolio becomes important in the life of his family, that unity will increase.

The Zogby data suggest that this is happening. Among 401(k) participants who have been in a plan one to five years, GOP affiliation rises to 33 percent; at six to ten years, 36 percent are Republicans. Workers who have been in a retirement plan more than ten years prefer the Republican party to the Democratic by 42 percent to 34 percent. For Congress, they prefer a Republican to a Democrat by 10 percentage points; for president, they prefer Bush to Gore by 13.

Today, fewer than half of the 60 million employees with long-term investment accounts have held them ten or more years. Over the next decade, another 30 million will reach that level. Seen in that light, the 2000 election was a mere breaker to a looming tidal wave of investor sentiment.

Other factors will intensify the impact of shareholding on politics. Compared to participants in work-based plans, portfolio owners with individual stocks develop a capitalist ideology rapidly. Zogby found that this cohort, after one to five years, is already 43 percent Republican (vs. 34 percent Democrat). The raw numbers of Americans who invest continue to expand, as does their portfolio wealth.

To what extent are worker-capitalists self-conscious of their status? Zogby International asked its respondents, "Do you consider yourself a member of the investor class?" One-fourth answered in the affirmative; these voters preferred Bush to Gore by 18 percentage points, and GOP congressional candidates to Democrats by 13 percentage points.

■

The 2000 election was a mere breaker to a looming tidal wave of investor sentiment.

■

But partisan preference is neither the only nor even the most striking opinion shift among worker-capitalists. Here is a sampling of how 10-year 401(k) investors' attitudes compare to those of noninvestors: The investors are 7 percent likelier to support a corporate tax cut; 10 percent likelier to support school vouchers; and 17 percent likelier to favor Social Security privatization. The investors are 3 percent likelier to oppose government regulation of prescription drugs; 9 percent likelier to oppose a minimum wage; and 11 percent likelier to oppose the breakup of Microsoft. They also favor free trade, death-tax reduction, and market-based energy policies by higher percentages than their noninvesting peers.

It is this educating tendency of capital ownership that the GOP has been slow to grasp. Looking forward, Republicans have reason to take heart: The diffusion of capital ownership is a work in progress, whose full impact is yet to be felt. But the investor class is not a black box that magically yields votes. Republicans' advantage among shareholders derives from championing their cause.

To attract investors from non-Republican backgrounds, the party should espouse entitlement privatization, education savings plans, medical savings accounts, and personal retirement portfolios, as well as tax relief for holders of capital gains and inheritable assets. And Republicans must *publicize* that espousal. For decades, the GOP's favorable treatment of capital was its secret, something to be negotiated behind closed doors with the captains of industry. But today, 78 percent of the population owns financial assets. Capital has become the party's most potent wedge issue, the basis of its impending majority. George W. Bush's forthright adoption of personally owned, privately managed retirement accounts was a step in the right direction. But few GOP candidates followed his lead.

The party has to actively recruit investor members—but it is failing abysmally in this task. During the past election cycle, only one group—the Republican Ideas Political Committee, which I chaired—produced ads that explicitly identified procapitalist positions with the GOP. This small Midwestern committee, with a budget of $100,000, participated in two of the party's eight pickups—districts where a Democrat-held seat turned Republican. If the party wishes to benefit from the spread of capital ownership, it must explicitly stake its claim to shareholders' allegiance.

Legislatively, Republicans should counter Democratic spending initiatives with tax-cut-driven savings programs for the individual investor. Where the Left offers 100,000 teachers, the Right should propose tax-sheltered, choice-driven education accounts. Where the Left offers "universal coverage," the Right should respond with Universal IRAs, applicable to retirement, home ownership, and business start-ups as well as to health care.

GOP tacticians must learn that the systematic development of a capital-owning electorate will yield great dividends over time. But these voters must be *cultivated*, if the narrow disappointments of 2000 are to become the prelude to broader victories in the years ahead. **NR**

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■ ELECTION 2000 SPECIAL ■

Weathering the Storm

Final days of a (W.) Bushie

JAY NORDLINGER

ELECTION DAY in Austin dawned dark and stormy.

Well, it did. The previous day, Monday, had been beautiful—a touch of Texas fall. But this was a gloomy, ominous day.

I went in to work around noon—no sense coming in earlier, I'd been told. Election Morning is always a funny, jittery period—there are little rumors, little anecdotes ("My Aunt Bess said turnout was big in Rochester"), but nothing solid. Nothing even remotely solid.

I'd been in Austin since mid September, having taken a leave from NATIONAL REVIEW. Had come to write speeches. And I was hopeful we were going to win. In fact, I *thought* we were going to win, and pretty comfortably.

Besides which: Bush was going to make a fine president—maybe even an extraordinary one. If for Social Security reform alone, it was important that he win. Then there was respect for the rule of law and all that.

When I got to the office, people were in a state of nervous anticipation. At about one o'clock, we got some preliminary figures: Neck and neck in Florida. ("That's good! The Panhandle votes late—and they're our people.") Three down in Pennsylvania. ("That's good too!" I wasn't sure why, but I trusted it was.) Badly down in Michigan. That, we'd expected. We'd been going south there for the last few days.

Stupid Michigan (my home state).

By late afternoon, it was clear we wouldn't have a blowout—maybe a nice, solid win, but not a blowout. Nothing of (senior) Bush 1988 proportions, which I'd anticipated—though quietly.

Of course, I'd been worried about the Zogby poll. On Election Eve, he showed Gore up, by two points. Some of us were thinking that Zogby'd be embarrassed, tarnished, on Election Day—"the *Chicago Tribune* of 2000"! (That paper, of course, had been the one that blared "DEWEY DEFEATS TRUMAN.") Boy, would he have egg on his face! And wasn't he polling in the daytime, when people—our people, working people, people busy doing useful things—weren't home?

Yeah, but he wasn't an idiot, Zogby. I mean, he could adjust for that. And he might be right.

Before long, we could see that the election was very, very . . . "tight." That was our word for it, the word of the night: tight. Michigan was still bad; Pennsylvania didn't look so hot; but Florida was okay, and that was the ball game. We'd have preferred a triumphant march through the states, but, hey: As I'd heard Jack Germond say a hundred times on *The McLaughlin Group*, when you win, you win—mandate, schmandate. No one remembers the margin. There's a winner and there's a loser—and the winner governs.

WAITING AND WONDERING

We had a couple of things on our schedule that evening: a reception for staff and friends, at the Stephen F. Austin Hotel, a few blocks from the (beautiful, majestic, red-granite) capitol; then the outdoor celebration in front of the capitol, where Governor Bush—no, President-elect Bush!—would give his victory speech (a model of humility and graciousness). We—certainly I—expected the speech to come shortly after ten o'clock, our time, after the polls had closed on the West Coast.

Decency would at last return to Washington. The Clinton-Gore poison would finally be flushed out.

Not wanting to hang around the office—just being nervous with colleagues and glancing at television—I headed for the reception at the hotel—to be nervous with colleagues and glance at television. The place was packed with celebrants, or would-be celebrants; a dozen TVs were spaced around two rooms, tuned to various channels.

As the returns came in, I began to wonder what had gone . . . you know: wrong. Well, not exactly wrong, but not exactly swimmingly. Someone said that the "late-breakers"—those voters who made up their minds at the last minute—had gone heavily to Gore. A substantial portion of them cited as their reason: DUI.

That stupid drunk-driving thing. This was the Democrats' ultimate dirty trick (if you don't count stealing the election, but more on that later). The report was true, of course: Bush had been pulled over in 1976. But it was still a dirty trick, as every sensitive mind realizes. A friend of mine put it this way: On the Thursday before the election, you spring on the public that your opponent, 24 years ago—*a quarter of a century ago*, is the other way to put it—saw a psychiatrist. (Shades of Eagleton.) He is perfectly well now. Moreover, he has spoken repeatedly of his past troubles, though in a fairly general way, and of his gratitude at overcoming them.

Your report is true. But is it also a dirty trick? Sure.

We also heard that there had been an immense black

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turnout, making the difference in several states. When, I wondered, would Republicans learn to talk to black voters? And what should they say? Same thing they say to everyone else, I should think. I would fall over dead—of joy—if some candidate, somewhere, spoke to a black audience about . . . missile defense. Why not? They're Americans, too, and they're presumably interested in being protected from nuclear attack.

Of course, we had faced the most hideous tactics the Democrats could scare up. Their ads all but accused Bush of lynching a black man in Texas. Gore went around campaigning with the dead man's sister. (Our vice president knows that subtle politics is for fools.) He suggested that our judicial philosophy was a throwback to slavery. Janet Reno—in a reprise of her 1998 trick—pretended that Republicans were about to suppress the black vote. You know: We were just sitting there at the polling places, waiting to demand of black voters that they guess the number of beans in a jar.

Again, hideous stuff: but entirely predictable. Democratic race-baiting, especially in late October, early November, is as given as the sunrise. And Gore's people—Bob Shrum, Donna Brazile, Gore himself—are hardly amateurs; indeed, they wrote the book.

Speaking of Brazile: I had long worried about her "ground game." She was always boasting of it. What did it mean, exactly? I mean, I understood, vaguely, that it had to do with turnout. But what did it involve, specifically? Simple, innocuous phone calls and knocks on doors—or cheating? We knew one thing: Gore volunteers from New York were enticing the homeless to the polls with cigarette packs.

Great. Didn't Gore sort of oppose tobacco? Something about a dead sister?

Yet another sinking feeling: Social Security. When Bush had proposed his reform, back in May, I thought it magnificent and laudable—but, of course, politically risky; perhaps even suicidal. Why give the Democrats a chance to accuse you of rounding on old people? But then, they'd do it anyway—and if you're going to get clobbered, you might as well get some reform out of it, on the chance you get in.

Bush had been fantastically responsible—even heroic—on Social Security. And now the Democrats were making him pay for it. Just as they'd promised.

And then there was our old friend liberal media bias. Oh, goodness: Don't get me started. When I joined the campaign, I was a firm believer in media bias, and all its terrible effects. Halfway through, I concluded I'd been a little naïve—it's worse than even I had thought.

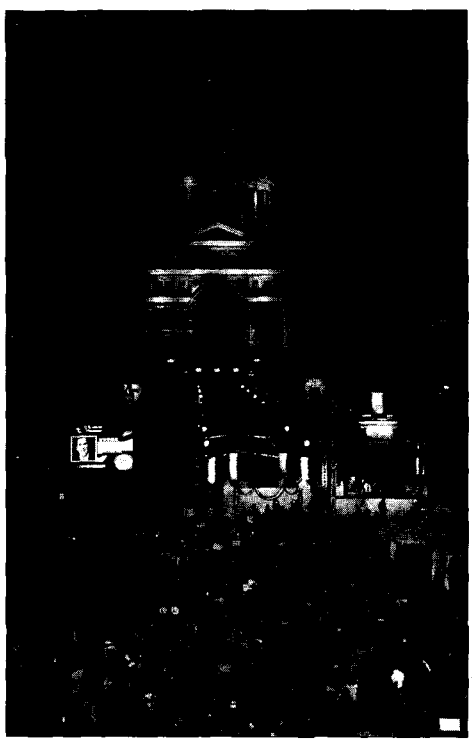
In the office, we Bushies were surrounded by television sets, going day and night. Sometimes I listened to music through earphones, so as not to hear what our friends were saying. I played a little game: When Katie Couric was interviewing someone, I could tell—I swear—whether she was interviewing a Republican or a Democrat *by the look on her face*. Amazing.

Conservatives, I find, usually make too much or too little of media bias. The more common error, I now believe, is to make too little of it. As Kate O'Beirne says, it's astonishing that a Republican *ever* wins.

One of the worst things, of course, about a rough Election Night is having to hear the television people report it. They can't help looking pleased as punch. For instance, I thought some of the newscasters would wet themselves when announcing that Hillary Clinton had won in New York.

I was reminded of a story about Reagan (as we junkies so often are): It's November '82, and he's watching the midterm results, in the White House residence. The Republicans have had a lousy day; a lady correspondent is saying so. Reagan says—to himself, under his breath—"Wipe the glee off your face, sister."

I've always loved that: "Wipe the glee off your face, sister." Exactly.



Paul Buck/Agence France Presse

Austin on Election Night: 'Tension City'

UP AND DOWN

At the Stephen F. Austin, it was hard to follow the results. As you were milling about—getting a drink, chatting idly—what you relied on was crowd reaction: There'd be a cheer. Then you'd rush to a TV to see what the fuss was about.

Bush carries Ohio! Yes, but that had been expected. Nothing to go nuts over. Bush carries Tennessee! That's satisfying—for obvious reasons—but, again, expected. Bush carries Arkansas! Ditto. (Speaking of which, Rush had vowed to turn out every one of his listeners. Had they showed? And don't they constitute something like half the country? If only.)

At some point in the night, there was a roar that shook the rafters. It was a deafening, sustained, almost animalistic roar: The networks had reversed themselves and given Florida to Bush! After sprinting and stumbling to the TVs, we thrust our three-fingered "W" signs at the glowing "electoral maps," in quasi-Nuremberg style (which embarrassed me, slightly, at the time).

Hang on: It proved not to be so good as all that. The networks had merely taken Florida out of the Gore column and placed it back among the undetermineds. But still, it was a reprieve—a new lease on life. (The clichés came thick and fast that night.)

In the Electoral College, the vote was eerily close. The popular vote? Even more so. Ever since I was a child, in Ann Arbor, I had measured people, crowds, by the Michigan football stadium—which seats about 100,000. And in this great big continental nation—stretching from the Atlantic Ocean to the Pacific, encompassing 270 million people—it was coming down to a couple of Michigan football stadiums. In some

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states—Wisconsin, Iowa, New Mexico, Oregon, Florida—it was coming down to a couple of rows. Unreal.

The hours wore on. State after state we were hoping to win . . . fell. The room got somewhat woozy. People were a little unsteady, a little strange—confused. Me, not least. It appeared we wouldn't know the final results until dawn. I didn't want to turn away, go to bed. We had come this far, and this, after all, was history. Couldn't one sleep later?

But at one o'clock, I gave way. It was my feet, frankly. I had been standing since about 6:30, and couldn't bear it any longer. So I said my goodbyes—made my apologies—and headed back to the office, to pick up my briefcase. Then I'd go home.

As I trudged down Congress Avenue—the hotel is at Congress and Seventh; the office is at Congress and Third; the capitol is at about Congress and Eleventh—I placed one last call to Rich Lowry. He was in a cab, returning from a TV studio to NATIONAL REVIEW's offices in New York. As we talked, he had another call. Would I hold?

In a flash, he was back: A friend of his had relayed big news: Bush had won! *We* had won! They had given us Florida.

With a lighter step, I ducked into the office, to fetch that briefcase. About twenty other staffers were there—hugging, high-fiving, and basically acting like something wonderful and necessary had happened, which it had.

We piled out of the office, to join the throng at the capitol—to hear and hail our Chief. It was a thrilling, probably unforgettable walk, those eight blocks up the street. Jubilation filled the air, as people cheered and wept and shouted and honked their horns. I called my wife back in New York, and held my cell phone aloft, so she could take in the sounds and the atmosphere.

Once at the capitol, we went through the metal detectors—can't be too cautious for the President-elect!—and huddled in front of the stage. It was cold, windy, and raining hard. But, in our orange "W. 2000" hats, we waved our little American flags and waited happily for Gore to concede, and our man to come on.

On either side of the stage were large TV screens, so we could follow everything on the networks. It was getting colder, windier, rainier. My feet were screaming. Where was Gore?

In due course, his motorcade pulled up to the site in Nashville where he was to bow out. That was good. But he wasn't appearing . . . and wasn't appearing. We kept staring at those large screens: What gives?

Eventually, we learned that something unusual was taking place in Florida. Gore had placed a second call to the Governor to retract his concession. It seemed there would be a recount.

Uh-oh. A super-close race. Ample room for Democratic mischief. Thoughts of 1960.

And then, who should appear, on those giant screens, but "Billy" Daley, the mayor's son. Great. He was vowing that the "campaign" would continue. It always does, doesn't it? The Clinton-Gore folks gave us the "permanent campaign." It continues in victory; it continues in defeat; it just goes on and on, without end.

We were somewhat frozen, bewildered. This was, we kept saying, "surreal." Now, I've never been sure of the precise meaning of "surreal." I suspect that it is as misused as "ironic," which people say whenever they mean interesting, or odd, or coincidental, or remarkable. I should, once and for all, get a handle on "surreal." But not now: "Surreal" must stand.

So there, surreally, was Daley. He acted like a man who knew something—something we *didn't* know. How could he be so confident? They had lost the election, and this was merely a pro forma recount. What were they going to do—cheat?

Bush, like Gore, wasn't going to come out. Instead we heard from our own campaign chairman, Don Evans, who said, essentially . . . thanks, and stay tuned.

By now, it was 4 A.M. Having tried to leave three hours before, I now walked back to my room. The wind whipped like something out of the Apocalypse. My umbrella turned inside out, practically shredding—had to throw it away. You might think of Lear on the heath, if you were the dramatic type.

At 5, I went to bed, full of fear.

THE MIND REELS

The next day, Wednesday, we were supposed to enjoy a program of festivities—a lunch, a party. But those were cancelled—or "postponed," we were all saying.

So I had plenty of time—way too much time—for my special brand of foreboding. I thought of a hundred things, none of them comforting, which included:

Back in Cold War days, we used to hear criticism—particularly from liberals—that the Soviets weren't "ten feet tall." As in, "Oh, come on: The Soviets aren't ten feet tall!" This comment would usually be directed at a conservative who feared that the American team was going to get its clock cleaned by Moscow.

Well, I confess to fearing that, when it comes to politics—the lowdown kind—the Democrats are ten feet tall. They're simply better at politics than we are. They are certainly better at fraud. For them, politics is war (or, at a minimum, a "blood sport"). On Election Night, Donna Brazile "messaged" to Gore: "Don't surrender!"

That's war language. It is not election—certainly *post-election*—language.

Okay, more thoughts: You can't cheat Reagan out of a 49-state victory over Mondale. But with the vote this close? Piece o' cake.

I thought of what Clinton said to Dick Morris on the night the Lewinsky scandal broke. Morris had done a quickie poll for the president, reporting that the public wouldn't forgive a tryst with an intern if accompanied by perjury. "Well," said Clinton, "*we'll just have to win.*"

I could hear the Gore camp: "Well, we'll just have to win."

I thought of the Bork battle, one of our worst failures. The Democrats pummeled him and pummeled him. Ted Kennedy, the ACLU, Norman Lear, Gregory Peck—all of them: They called him a Nazi (in a word). And we, the good guys, stood by, not wanting to "politicize" the matter, staying above the fray, appearing statesmanlike, being true to the process, trusting in the right.

And we got screwed—"Borked," we would later call it.

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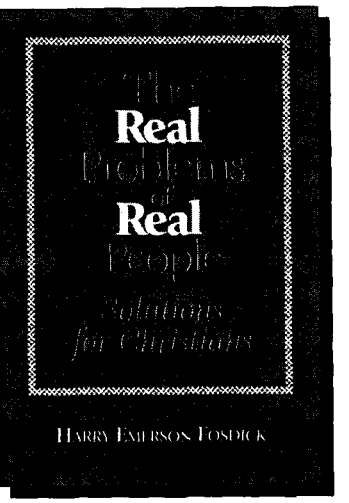

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By midday Wednesday, we were approaching urban-myth time. Someone said that ballot boxes had materialized—just like that—in a couple of black churches. You're kidding? Voting in church? Where was the wall-of-separation crowd now?

Then I thought of the players: Jeb was governor, yeah. But he would recuse himself and be sweet. Meantime, the attorney general was a Democrat—Gore's state chairman. And that reminds me: What about the *federal* attorney general? The snatcher of Elián? What can she do, with her unlovely Justice Department? And what can *Clinton* do? He's not just going to sit around, revering the Constitution, is he?

All of a sudden, Jesse Jackson's down there, yelling, shaking his fist. The scene has turned racial. But then, it always does in America—the Democrats see to it that it does.

I felt myself pulled down into the fever swamps. We had always maintained they'd "say or do anything" for power. Well, would they? The mind spun with awful scenarios—scenarios of Democratic swindle. A half-delirium crept in—but a half-delirium based on reason and experience. Probably the worst kind.

I was to depart Austin on Thursday—an awkward juncture, I know, but New York, and this magazine, awaited me. On Wednesday night, I went to Earl Campbell's barbecue place, on Sixth Street, for a final, enormous bowl of chili. As a special treat, Earl himself was there—for the first time of my month-and-a-half stay. The former NFL (and University of Texas) great looked like he could still run through a brick wall, smiling that gentle smile of his.

Into the small hours, I talked, and worried, with another campaignsman. As we were wrapping up, his cell phone rang. He blanched, slightly. Hanging up, he remarked, "Some ugliness in Florida."

Indeed.

LIMBO CITY

The next morning, I packed, and took a long, solemn listen to the Beethoven C-sharp-minor quartet. Then—with the most disquieting feeling of incompletion—I boarded a plane.

When I got home, I could barely stand to hear the television. My wife wanted to listen to the news; I retreated to the other room. I *did* catch a glimpse of (Gore campaign spokesman) Chris Lehane, in dark glasses, overseeing the nonsense in Palm Beach. Somehow he no longer seemed twerpy or dorky. Instead he was . . . menacing, as though out of a nightmare—as though engaged in a colossal theft.

My father-in-law called. And he put in a single sentence everything I was thinking, fearing: "The only way for this to end is for Gore to win." Yes: They'll press and press, and bully and bully, and maneuver and maneuver until they get the numbers they desire. Then they'll say, "Game over." And the Republicans will withdraw graciously—as we always do—muttering about the good of the country.

Right this moment, it is Monday, November 13. Our magazine has to go to press. We don't yet know who will take the oath on January 20. And—to borrow a recent phrase from Governor Bush: a splendid man who would make a superb U.S. president—here we sit. **NR**

End of the Line?

The meaning of Al Gore's life

NOEMIE EMERY

FLAILING in postelection frenzy, Albert Gore Jr. may be exiting politics much as he lived it: in a slash-and-burn rage at a threat to his destiny—and his goal of winning his dead father's praise. Raised to be president—told that he *must* be president—and believing that to be less would make his life worthless, he is now in a terminal tantrum at being denied what is "his." The crisis has come down to this.

The Bush–Gore election was billed as a battle of equals, two dynastic heirs of political families, both groomed for power and prominence. The reality, however, is something quite different. Bush was raised around power, but not wholly in it, with a political life posed as but one of the options. Gore was raised in a family driven by politics, with power and office the unique goal. The prized only son (Bush has three brothers), Gore became the sole focus of parental exertions toward power. In the past century, two hungry men failed in their final ambitions, and brought up their sons to surpass them. The first was Joseph P. Kennedy, who raised his four sons as a corps of avengers. The second was Albert Gore Sr.

No dynastic son, not even Joe Kennedy Jr., was aimed at the White House with such intense pressure as the younger Al Gore. Gore Sr. fought his way up from direst poverty, with political gifts and a burning ambition. His failure to win national office wounded him deeply. "He had a naked, desperate desire to see his boy be president," said a 1988 campaign aide to Gore Jr., quoted by biographer Bill Turque. Adds Turque: "There was a lot of thwarted ambition that washed off onto the son."

Al's birth in 1948 was announced on page one of the *Nashville Tennessean*. At age six, he was touted in the *Knoxville News-Sentinel* as a rising political star. Both in and out of the best schools in the country, he was groomed to be a political leader, his activities chosen for breadth of experience. A wall in his parents' house that displayed family photos was set aside for his record as president. He was sent to clear fields, so that he could be president. Friends at college thought he went to poker games to get a measure of the common touch. His fitful attempts to explore other careers were not taken seriously by others, and perhaps not even by himself. Said reporter David Maraniss of Gore's stint as a journalist: "Six of his newsroom friends . . . spent one night drafting a plan for Gore to be president, replete with timetables of when he had to run for the House and the Senate. They had him in the Oval Office in 2008."

Noemie Emery lives in Alexandria, Va., and writes frequently about politics and politicians. She is working on a book about political dynasties.

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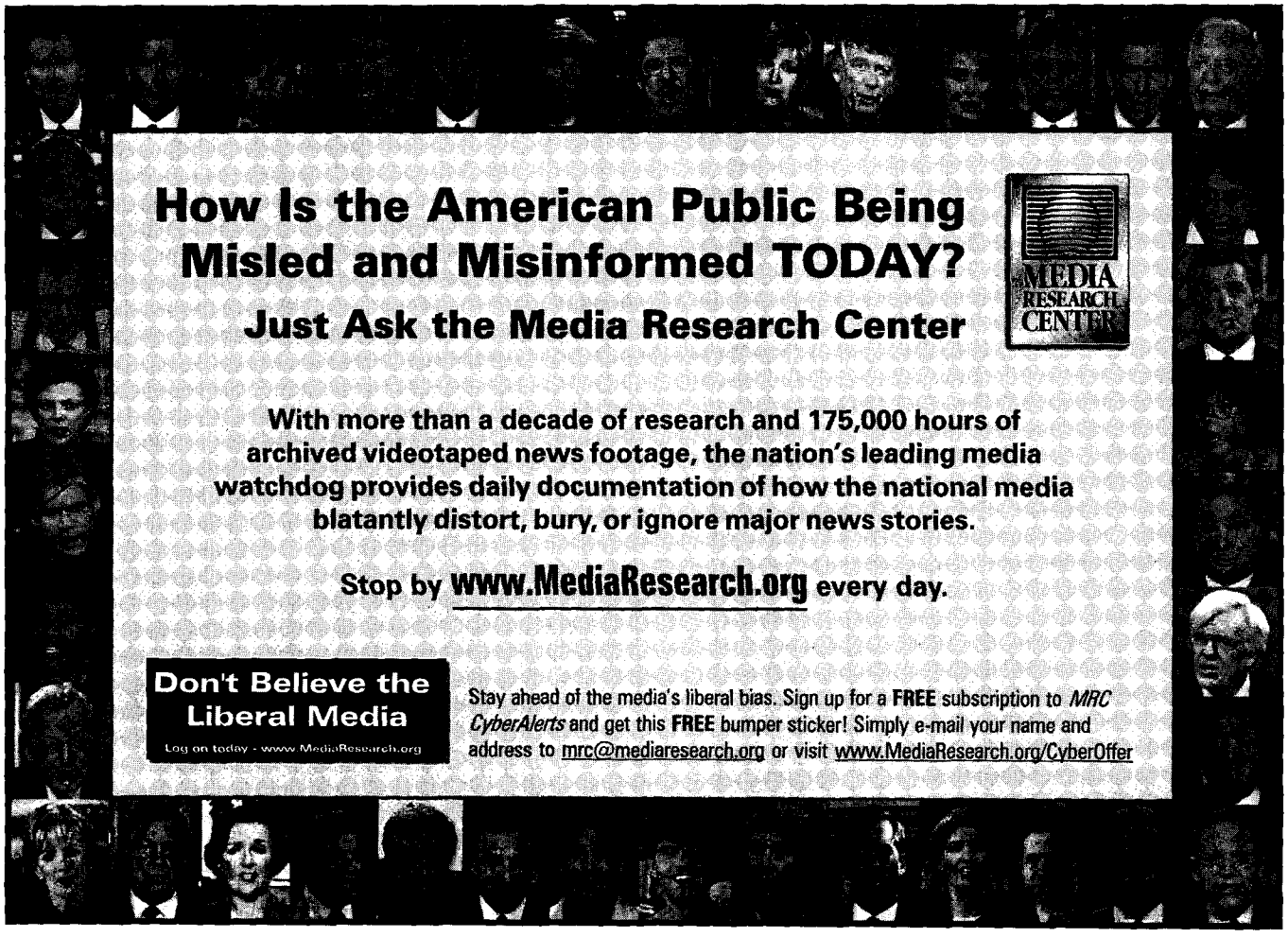
In 1976, at age 28, he ran for and won his father's old House seat; eight years later, he was elected to the Senate. At his father's behest, he ran for president in 1988. A Gore campaign memo linked him to a string of historical figures: "A 28-year cycle . . . TR 04—FDR 32—JFK 60—AGJ 88 . . . Great presidents . . . Harvard grads . . . prep schools . . . political families . . . young." "He really believes he is an historical figure," *New Republic* literary editor Leon Wieseltier told *The New Yorker*'s Peter Boyer. "He really does believe that he was born to lead." With the failed 1988 race as the sole flaw in his otherwise charmed résumé, he more than ever believed in his destiny, ready and willing when Bill Clinton, in 1992, came shopping for ballast and gravitas, and picked the two-term senator as his vice president and political heir.

All seemed ideal, but for one minor matter: Gore's political instincts were nil. The elder Gore was a born politician, with a silver voice and a rampaging hunger for public approval: happy when performing in front of an audience. Young Al was different: happy alone, with abstractions or theories. He threw up before his first public campaign announcement. His speeches were "pitiful," Maraniss tells us. "His body language, the message, the cadence of his speech, all wrong." They did not get better. His mind was capacious and retentive, but rigid and cumbersome. His favorite issues, which he selected, picked apart, and committed to memory, concerned science and theories, not people. His temperament also was anti-political: confrontational, yet aloof. Presidential scholar Fred Greenstein attributed much of Ronald Reagan's success to the negotiating skills he had learned as a trade-union president. Gore has no such skills. He takes advice from a small group, mainly his family. He dislikes criticism, and makes sure he gets little. In meetings, says Maraniss, "Gore held an unyielding position from which he hectored his opponents . . . his oldest friends often lament in private that he seems not to want to listen to them if he knows they are going to disagree." When challenged, he flashes the "Gore glare."

Gore's public style may occasionally evoke John F. Kennedy, but it's usually closer to that of Richard Nixon, another loner who wore dark suits on the beach. Nor does he have talent in running campaigns: He might coast with Bill Clinton, or as the son of his father, but tends to tank on his own. His campaigns were top-heavy with high-paid consultants, who fought with each other. He could not pick a message, or stick to a theme. He could not delegate, wasting time on minutiae. Said an aide in the 1988 effort, "He spent an enormous amount of time handling crap." In public, he had no sense of how to present himself, and no knowledge of how he appeared. After the embarrassing news conference in which he immortalized the phrase "no controlling legal authority" (which Gore thought that he had handled beautifully), the *Washington Post*'s John F. Harris wrote that Gore's miscues suggest "a politician still struggling with how to project images and invoke symbols with the mastery that modern politics demands." Even Bill Clinton wondered aloud "how you could get so far in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politics" while being as tone-deaf as Gore seemed to be.

A very square peg in the round hole of politics, Gore has showed signs of this strain all his life. "Al Gore had always been a role," Turque quotes one of Gore's professors at Vanderbilt. "The question was, who was he? And what did he want to do?" Apparently, he never found out. At Harvard, he was transfixed by Erik Erikson, who coined the phrase "identity crisis." In 1989, he consulted Knoxville-area psychologist Lance Laurance about problems involving fathers and sons. He latched on to, quoted, and touted books dealing with children's resentment of difficult parents. (One of these children acted out his resentment by shooting his own dictatorial father, who had "forced him to spend an entire summer cleaning several acres of ground with a razor"—echoing stories of Gore as a teenager being forced to clear fields with an axe.) Another was Alice Miller's *The Drama of the Gifted Child*, which addressed "the damage done by parents who love their children only in proportion to their compliance with their expectations . . . Those who spend their childhoods living up to parental ideals often go on to great success . . . but end up losing touch with their personalities, struggling instead with the 'false self' that they present to the world."

■

Perhaps the worst thing that happened to Gore took place in 1938, when his big sister, Nancy, was born a girl.

■

Gore's struggles with the "false self" he presents have been played out in front of a national audience, as the reserved, unbending policy wonk tries unconvincingly to play the warm, engaging public man. It is here that the tin ear tends to come into play. He cannot try to establish contact with others short of pathetic and cringe-inducing invasions of privacy. He cannot show strength without being a bully. He can't argue with others without making them demons, implying that people who differ on preferential quotas are in favor of lynching and slavery. He can't dress himself without advice from a handler. And he can't look simply normal to save his own life. His face, in repose, appears strained and agonized; his gestures exaggerated, sometimes grotesquely so. Fully aware of his shortcomings in this area, Gore studies to cure them, which makes them even worse. Gore aide Carter Eskew told Joe Klein that Gore was like a "white basketball player," lacking the moves, but driven by discipline.

Most people go into politics because they want power, enjoy being with people, or need the warm approval of the masses. Gore seems to have none of these feelings. He went into it to placate his parents, who told him, from birth, to do so. He seemed to have, more than most children, a desperate urge to please. "He always did everything we wanted," Pauline Gore has stated. He did. They wanted him to obey, and he did. They wanted him to perform, and he did. They wanted him to go to Congress, and then to hold national office. Above all, they insisted he ought to be president, so this is what he, too, now wants. They also gave him an overlarge view of his talents and destiny. "From birth," Peter Boyer has written, "Al Gore's life has been framed by exalted expectations, his political prospects cast not simply as ambition, but as something more like fate." Combine these things with his lack of political instinct, and one has the roots of his very odd style: the sense that his whole life rests on being elected, that whatever serves his ends is moral, and that what stands in his way is dispensable. His parents want it, so it has to be justified. His own mother gave him advice that he lives by: "Smile . . . Attack." The perfect son and gentleman, he does.

Like Gore, George W. Bush and John Kennedy would probably not have thought of the presidency had they not been born into prominent families, whose influence and connections they enjoyed all their lives. But by the time they were running for president, Bush and Kennedy had come to like politics, to enjoy what they were doing. Campaigning, they went with the grain of their natures. But Gore had to go against his. Campaigning for almost two years, he has forced himself, pushed himself, exhausted himself, and endured torrents of personal mockery—just to see his prize pulled away, by a handful of votes, in a jerkwater state, to a man he regards as unworthy. To see his parents denied.

Perhaps the worst thing that happened to Gore took place in 1938, when his big sister, Nancy, was born a girl. She, by all accounts, was the magnetic one, the one with charisma and humor; the born politician who could have gone out and won, on the strength of her talents, what her family so desperately wanted. But the sexes were wrong, and so poor Nancy languished, and took to the smoking and drinking that killed her. It was her little brother, the stiff one, who bore the family passion, who was bent to it, and bent out of shape by it. In the process, a perfectly good policy wonk, who would have been happy enough in a think tank somewhere, churning out data on warheads and warming, was turned instead into a bad politician, who never got the words or the music quite right. Win or lose, it is now widely acknowledged that he has been in fact a terrible candidate, who squandered the gift of a splendid economy, and blew his own lead in his debate performance, when his desperation and his viciousness shone through.

His parents surely did not mean ill to their child or country when they tried to mold their bright, eager son into presidential material, but it is now clear enough they did both. They told a man who would become a very bad politician that he had to go out and win the highest political office in the country, if not the world. He tried and he tried, and his clumsiness killed him, and then in the end he sent out an army of thugs and shysters, led by the son of a vote-stealing dynasty, to steal for him the election he could not win himself. So what if the prize that he "wins" turns out to be hollow, if he is seen as unclean by half of the voters, if the picture wall in the Gore family manse contains pictures of an inaugural boycotted by prominent people, with counter-parades chanting "Hail to the Thief"? Ambitious parents over the years have managed to do a great deal of damage, but usually only on the private level, producing, like the Adamses, the occasional drunk and/or suicide. The Gores, by contrast, have created a monster willing to trash the whole country to fulfill their ambitions. Nice work. **NR**

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'Twixt Heaven and Earth

How the parties play out

JOHN DERBYSHIRE

There are two components that, together, decide how a person votes: interest and imagination. The smaller the scope of the office being voted on, the larger the component of interest, and vice versa. When voting for a superintendent of highways, I want to know if my roads will be looked after, and very little else. As it happens, I know the name of my superintendent of highways here in Huntington, N.Y.—it is painted on all the sweeping trucks and snowplows—but I have no idea whether he is a Republican, a Democrat, or a member of the Nation of Islam. What does it matter, so long as he fills the potholes?

When voting for governor or president, however, imagination predominates. Interest is not absent; but even where it exists, it is colored by imagination, and imagination very often overrides it. If presidential candidate B offers an across-the-board tax cut, while candidate G favors a cut "targeted" at the lower-middle class, a rich person's interest plainly lies with B. A lot of very rich people—great swaths of Beverly Hills and Manhattan's Upper East Side, probably—will nonetheless vote for G. Their imaginations have swayed them, in defiance of their interests.

This is natural and reasonable. Presidents and governors have powers of wide scope. My superintendent of highways cannot send me to war, control my rent, audit my finances, appoint Supreme Court judges, or have me arrested. That's why I have to approach candidates for these higher offices with some concern for large, general matters of philosophy and style. That is where imagination kicks in. Possibly presidential candidate B, if elected, will give me more tax relief than candidate G. Still, candidate G seems to be a person who shares my view of the world, of the national interest, of the harmonious society.

When it comes to imagining an ideal for society, our natures take one of two paths, and the politics of any free society reflects these paths. There is always a party of the Left and a party of the Right; there are always liberals and conservatives. There is always a party of Heaven, which seeks to raise us up by freeing us from the shackles of the past, to transform us into angels by vanquishing all those evils—racism, militarism, ignorance, tradition—that oppress and confuse us. And there is a party of Earth, which takes us for what we are, without any promise that our clayey natures can be much uplifted, which assumes that institutions that have worked satisfactorily for a century or more probably have something to be said in their favor, and whose instinct is, like the great Samuel Johnson, to

Mr. Derbyshire is a contributing editor of NATIONAL REVIEW.

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"laugh at schemes of political improvement." Muddy these tendencies up with some elements of interest, and you have the politics of a democratic society.

The party of Heaven in modern America is, of course, the Democrats. The meritocratic, hedonistic society of today, with its multitude of choices for almost everyone, suits them rather well. When racism, class, war, and poverty were great glowering beasts, it was natural to suppose that the reduction of them would be a long and dogged process, not much of which could be accomplished in a single lifetime, so that perhaps there was little point in any effort against them at all. "The poor, they are always with us." Now, when those evils seem to be mere shadows, it is easy to believe, like the generals of World War I, that one last push will do the trick—if only there were not a few fools and reactionaries still standing in the way. Hence the great passion of the Left in petty matters, as documented in Richard Bernstein's 1994 book, *Dictatorship of Virtue*:

> *Out of the burning wish for betterment grew what has now* become a kind of bureaucracy of the good, fighting battles that have already been won, demanding ever greater commitments of virtue from a recalcitrant population.

Except that, alas, the population has proved less recalcitrant than Bernstein hoped: They have bared their backs obediently to be scourged by the Virtuecrats, minding their tongues, purging their thoughts, as required by the hectoring martinets of political correctness.

There can be no doubt, then, that the Democrats have seized the moral high ground in our society. Never mind Heaven and Earth: The Democrats have fixed in the imaginations of very large numbers of Americans the image of themselves as the Kind Party, while Republicans are the Mean Party. Thus when, in the recent campaign, Democrats accused George W. Bush of killing elderly nursing-home patients in Texas, or when Gore's friends at the NAACP put on TV advertisements suggesting that Bush was an accessory to the lynching of James Byrd, millions of Americans nodded in agreement. There are no corresponding accusations of nastiness we Republicans can make in return. We may grumble about the gutting of the military, the tribalizing of the populace, the politicizing of the judiciary, and the squandering of public funds, but these things do not have the force, the gut-punch of James Byrd's daughter snarling: "It was like my father was killed all over again."

The moral arrogance of the Democratic party draws its inspiration from one of the oldest, most potent, and most persistent of all the dispositions the human political imagination is prone to: utopianism. We live in a progressive age, and both of our great political parties are, by any reasonable historical standard, progressive in their views, as are most Americans. But while Republicans seek to improve our condition, Democrats want to perfect it. Indeed, at their most ambitious, they seek to perfect *us*, our very natures. Flawless justice; absolute equality; the purging of all impurities of speech and thought—you do not have to be long among liberals before you spot these longings. The sensitivities of the modern Left have been refined to those of the princess in Hans Christian Andersen's story "The Princess and the Pea." They cannot sleep while any injustice anywhere, no matter how trivial, stands uncorrected—any offense taken by how dimwitted soever an offendee ("niggardly"), any second-grade girl "sexually harassed" by a classmate, any ballot spoiled.

This messianic, chiliastic program is as old as humanity. It is one of the inspirations of Plato's *Republic*, and seems, from the little we know, to have guided the Spartacists in their rebellion against Rome. Chinese peasant uprisings, from the "Yellow Turbans" of the 2nd century to the Maoists of the 20th, preached chiliastic, end-of-history, City of the Sun doctrines of human perfectibility. Such doctrines run wild in our universities, as Bernstein's book made abundantly plain.

The utopian virus was carried to these shores by the Puritans, and it is their descendants who form the cadre of modern American utopianism. Look at the county-by-county map of the 2000 presidential vote put out by *USA Today*. Massachusetts, Rhode Island, and Connecticut were Gore's best states, and picking out the scattering of blue (Gore) counties in a sea of red (Bush) you can almost follow the wagon-ruts of New England emigrants across the Midwest to Washington State, Oregon, and the north California coast.

While the Party of Heaven was consolidating its grip on New England in the 18th century, the Party of Earth was pouring into the colonial back country, the Appalachians, and the South. These were the Scotch-Irish: rough, loud, belligerent people from the battle-scarred, disputed lands of Ulster and the Scottish borders. Devoted to their weapons and their natural liberty (and inclined to think that those less devoted did not deserve liberty at all), intensely but only spasmodically religious, always ready for a fight, they took over the southern and much of the western part of the country, creating that fundamental division shown in the *USA Today* map, and in a state-by-state version on our TV screens on November 7. If you doubt the division is fundamental, check the series of electoral-vote maps in the concluding section of David Hackett Fischer's *Albion's Seed*. The maps for

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1896 and 1948 are especially good matches for this year's vote.

If you probe still deeper down into political psychology, you spot something darker and more frightening, something everyone who has studied the utopian impulse closely, or been gifted with special insight into it, has remarked on. When I teach Orwell's novel *1984* to young people, one thing that always raises puzzled questions is the name he gave to the prevailing philosophy in Eastasia: "Death-Worship." What did Orwell—a writer who chose his words with utmost care, and knew Asia well—mean by this? And who, anyway, is Big Brother?

The two questions are related, and death is the connection. Orwell was dying when he wrote the book, and knew it. In his essay on *Gulliver's Travels*, he speaks thus of the Houyhnhnms, a race of placid, intelligent horses who lord it over the brutish, humanoid Yahoos: "It is not because they oppress the Yahoos that the Houyhnhnms are unattractive. They are unattractive because the 'Reason' by which they are governed is really a desire for death."

Orwell was getting at the fact that human society is nothing but the human soul writ large, and a part of the human soul yearns for its own extinction. This yearning has been most powerfully voiced in poetry: Tennyson's "Tithonus," Keats's "Ode to a Nightingale," and the lovely song in *Cymbeline* are its finest expressions in English. It finds its political outlet in utopianism, the longing for a society of perfect equality, perfect peace—conditions that can actually be attained in only one place. Standing at the graveside while they buried his Down-syndrome child, Charles de Gaulle murmured: "Now she is like all the others."

The bluntest expression of this theme was given by the mathematician Igor Shafarevich in his book *The Socialist Phenomenon*. Using "socialist" as a synonym for "utopian," Shafarevich surveyed the utopian impulse down through the ages to his own time in Brezhnev's Soviet Union, concluding that "the death of mankind is not only a conceivable result of the triumph of socialism—it constitutes the goal of socialism." Lesser folk have apprehended the same truth by even more direct experience. A Buddhist Cambodian interviewed in François Ponchaud's book, *Cambodia: Year Zero*, lone survivor of a horrible massacre by the utopian Khmer Rouge, described them with innocent accuracy as "servants of the Prince of Death."

We can reasonably hope that our institutions are sufficiently well rooted, and our people sufficiently well armed, that we need not fear this country succumbing to utopian despotism. There is always, though, in every human society, a persistent tug in that direction. In our society, that tug comes from the left wing of the Democratic party. The utopian tendency springs from the fundamentals of human nature, and can never be eliminated, but it must be contained, countered, and exposed. It must also be mocked: A robust sense of humor is one of our best defenses against those who seek to make us perfect by stripping us of our ancient liberties. There is no laughter in the City of the Sun. **NR**

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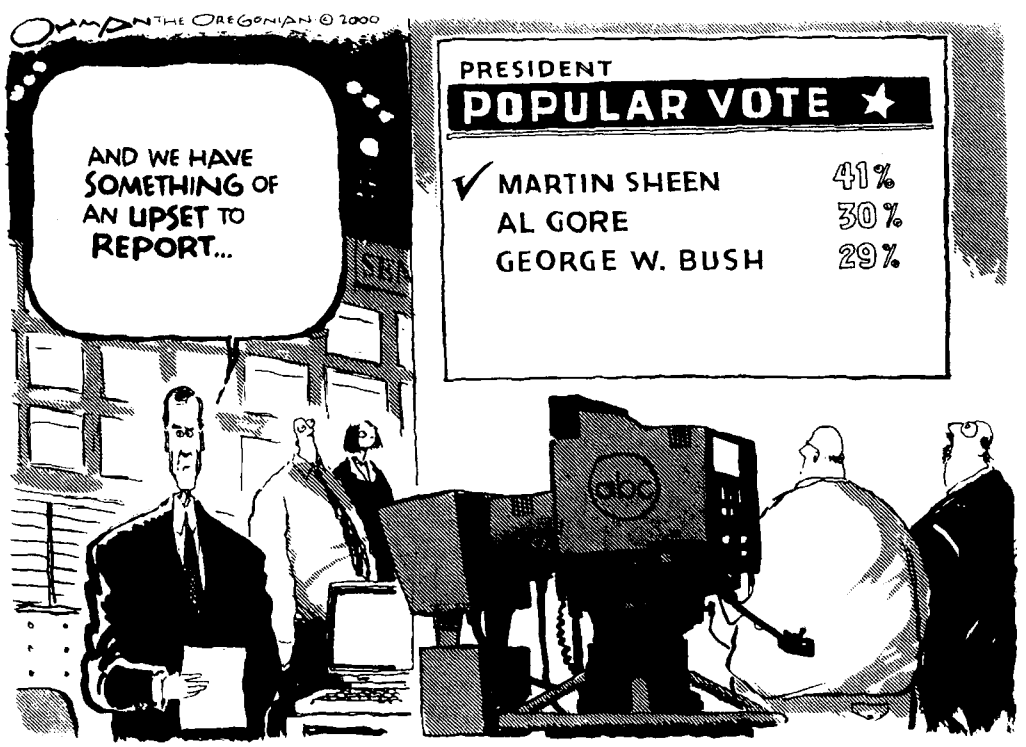

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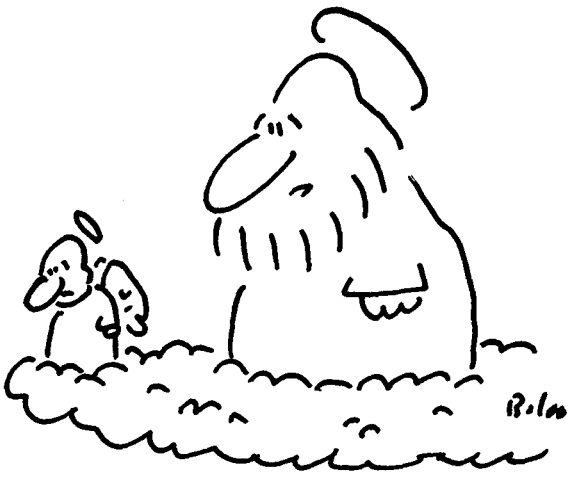

"Are you sure? Where would Cain find a lawyer?"

Queen Hillary

Her writ holds sway upstate and down.
From Buffalo to Chinatown
She left largesse like regal Bess:
Now, like a figurine in chess,
She scans the board as Orrin Hatch
Blows kisses from his humble thatch;
Then, here and there, she oozes spoor
To guide the party toward '04.

—W. H. von Dreele

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DOCUMENT EXTRACT: TELEPHONE INTERCEPT 8 NOVEMBER 2000 03:37
VPOTUS: The situation has changed.
GOVBUSH: Ex-CUSE me?
VPOTUS: The situation in Florida has changed.
GOVBUSH: But Jeb assures me that I've won Florida.
VPOTUS: Your younger brother is not the ultimate authority in this matter.
GOVBUSH: So you're retracting your concession?
VPOTUS: You don't have to get snippy.

DOCUMENT EXTRACT: TELEPHONE INTERCEPT 10 NOVEMBER 2000 14:43
VPOTUS: It *is* confusing.
SENLIEB: Yeah, it is.
VPOTUS: I mean, an arrow pointing to a dot . . .
SENLIEB: I agree. I agree.
VPOTUS: I mean, you *know* who those people were going to vote for.
SENLIEB: Of course.
VPOTUS: They were trying to vote for me. And you, of course.
SENLIEB: Right, right.
VPOTUS: I mean, Joe, let's be honest here. One of the big attractions of our ticket to that, um, constituency is, um, the whole Jewish thing, which you share, of course.
SENLIEB: Right, right.
VPOTUS: I'm not trying to turn this into a Jewish thing, of course, but . . .
SENLIEB: But that's not why you picked me, right?
VPOTUS: Hmmm?
SENLIEB: I mean, you didn't sit down last summer and pick a Jewish guy just to win Florida, right?
[SILENCE]
SENLIEB: Right?
VPOTUS: You don't have to get snippy.

DOCUMENT EXTRACT: TELEPHONE INTERCEPT 11 NOVEMBER 2000 10:23
VPOTUS: Well, thanks for your call.
FIRLADY: You and I haven't always gotten along and . . .
VPOTUS: And I regret that. I really do.
FIRLADY: Yeah, well, it's just that . . .
VPOTUS: So it's Hillary in 2008, huh? Terrific. Terrific.
FIRLADY: Or 2004.
VPOTUS: Not following you.
FIRLADY: You know, if . . .
VPOTUS: If what?
FIRLADY: Al, at some point you're going to have to give this thing up.
VPOTUS: Give up?
FIRLADY: Al, you can't win this thing in the courts.
VPOTUS: I won the popular vote.
FIRLADY: Winning the popular vote isn't the same thing as being popular, okay?
VPOTUS: Look who's talking.
FIRLADY: Hey, friend, I WON my contest, okay?
VPOTUS: You don't have to get snippy.

DOCUMENT EXTRACT: TELEPHONE INTERCEPT 13 NOVEMBER 2000 19:34
TIPGORE: How far are you?
VPOTUS: I'm just heading up Connecticut Avenue. Be there in five minutes.
TIPGORE: How did the meeting go?
VPOTUS: Not great. A lot of pressure to concede. To withdraw the lawsuits. To wrap it all up by Friday. Even Daley was pitching that. What do you think?
TIPGORE: Maybe you should do what Nixon did.
VPOTUS: Fight like a wildcat in a desperate attempt to cling to power? Baby, that's what I'm doing here.
TIPGORE: Not that Nixon. The earlier one. The 1960 one.
VPOTUS: Never been a big fan of that one.
TIPGORE: Won't you even think about it?
VPOTUS: What is this? W.W.N.D.? What Would Nixon Do?
TIPGORE: He went on to win two elections. He died a lionized statesman.
VPOTUS: He was a reviled man. He was universally disliked.
TIPGORE: So you see the parallels.
VPOTUS: I can't believe I'm hearing this. You want me to concede? My own wife wants me to concede.
TIPGORE: Al, think strategically. Let Bush have this one. Let the recession hit. Run in 2004 . . .
VPOTUS: You don't have to get snippy.

DOCUMENT EXTRACT: TELEPHONE INTERCEPT 14 NOVEMBER 09:33
GOVBUSH: Why can't we get this over with?
VPOTUS: If Jeb had done his job and delivered Florida to you, we wouldn't be in this mess.
GOVBUSH: Yeah. But if you had won your own home state, we wouldn't be in this mess either.
VPOTUS: You don't have to get snippy.

END TRANSCRIPT

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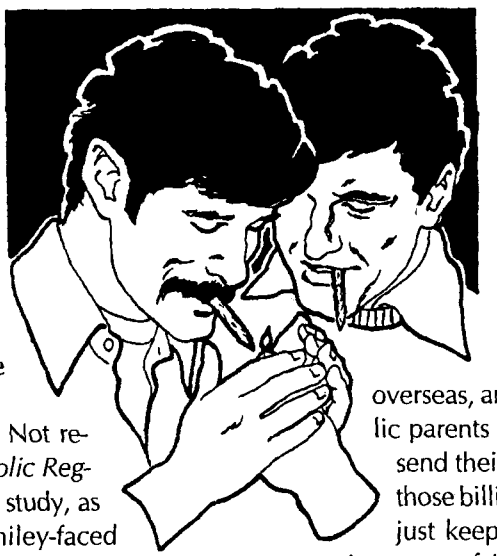
DEGENERATE PRIESTS: Deal With the Problem !

Recently *The Kansas City Star* reported on a major study it conducted on homosexuality and AIDS cases in the Catholic priesthood (the series ran in Knight Ridder papers nationwide). *The Star*'s now-famous verdict, based on death certificates of priests and other sources, was: "it appears that priests are dying of AIDS at a rate at least four times that of the general U.S. population...." According to *The Star*, this is a conservative estimate, for other statistics and experts put the rate at 7, 8, and even 11 times that of the general population.



The Star also sent a confidential survey to 3,000 priests, of whom 801 responded. Priests who said they "either have HIV or AIDS or might have but haven't been tested" were roughly 3½ times that of the general population.

Should Catholics be alarmed? Not really, according to the *National Catholic Register*, which pooh-poohed *The Star*'s study, as did *Our Sunday Visitor*, another smiley-faced Catholic paper.

About *The Star*'s survey of priests, a *Register* editorial said: "Almost three-quarters [73 percent]...never responded, which indicates the survey wasn't a reliable sample." For the sake of argument, let's accept the *Register*'s nay-saying, let's forget the death certificates, and let's go so far as to speculate — in the *Register*'s favor — that of the 2,199 priests who didn't respond to the survey, none has AIDS and none fears he might (which of course is extremely unlikely). If you do your math, that would mean that the percentage of priests who have AIDS or are engaging in AIDS-prone activity almost matches the general population. Yikes! If our priests — whom we expect to be *models* of Catholic morality and who take a *vow* of celibacy — are almost as degenerate as the general population, we've got a huge problem! Even if they're only half as degenerate, we've got a major problem. After all, they're *priests!*

The *Los Angeles Times* has reported that, according to Linkup, a group supporting victims of sexually immoral clergy, the Catholic Church nationwide "has paid $1 billion in lawsuit judgments and settlements since 1985." That's a staggering sum, most of it coming out of the pockets of the long-suffering and bewildered laity. Just imagine how many prolife projects could have been funded, how many *beautiful* churches could have been erected, how many missionaries could have been sent overseas, and how many hard-working Catholic parents could have gotten financial aid to send their children to Catholic schools with those billion dollars! And the scandals, which just keep coming, cast unwarranted suspicion on our faithful, moral priests.

When Catholic papers can be perceived as trying to shoot the messenger conveying the bad news, few Catholics are reassured. Moreover, Catholics are sick and tired of denials, damage-control, spins, P.R., and episcopal cover-ups and hush-hush pay-offs. Real Catholics demand a housecleaning!

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BOOKS, ARTS & MANNERS

Man and Techno-man

LESLIE LENKOWSKY

The Virtue of Prosperity: Finding Values in an Age of Techno-Affluence, by Dinesh D'Souza (Free Press, 284 pp., $26)

LAST August, Jack and Lisa Nash of Englewood, Colo., brought into the world a new son, Adam. As with his Biblical namesake, the birth of this Adam marked a milestone in human history. For he was conceived in a laboratory dish in order to provide disease-free blood cells for his sister, Molly, who was suffering from a rare and deadly form of anemia. Before implanting him in his mother's womb, the parents rejected several other embryos that, it was discovered, carried genes for the disease too. The embryo that became Adam did not, and he thus became the first person brought into the world because his parents not only desired another child, but also wanted some of his "parts," as a commentator put it.

But if Dinesh D'Souza is right, Adam will not be the last. Just as he once did with the nation's colleges and universities in the bestselling *Illiberal Education*, D'Souza, a research scholar at the American Enterprise Institute, explores in his new book a world that on the outside looks to be prosperous and dynamic, but is in fact morally challenged: the world of high-technology inventors and entrepreneurs whose efforts are not just reshaping the nation's economy, but—more profoundly—the conditions of human existence. While he finds much to like about their accomplishments, he

Dinesh D'Souza by David Smith

is bothered by their inability to understand and articulate the values guiding them, or, in many cases, to recognize that their skills may be taking them (and us) into ethically dubious waters.

The booming biotechnology sector provides the foremost example of how the advances we are making could reap more evil than good. "Once scientists have mastered the workings of genes," D'Souza writes, "they will, for the first time, possess a new kind of power": They will be able not just to "design and custom-order" children (as the Nashes did), but also to change the human species itself. "Some visionaries of the high-tech world," D'Souza informs us, even see the potential for merging man and his machines, thereby transforming what it means to be alive.

And that's not all. The new technology-driven economy, claim its critics (whom D'Souza lumps together as the "Party of Nah"), threatens the environment by increasing human capacity to exploit "nature and natural resources." It weakens the bonds of community by substituting "virtual connections" for real ones, information for knowledge, and sensation for aesthetic experience. Not least importantly, it exacerbates feelings of unfairness, as those who develop the new technologies are rewarded with incomprehensibly vast sums of money for seemingly little effort.

Against such accusations stands what D'Souza labels the "Party of Yeah," the innovators themselves and their intellectual allies, such as George Gilder and Freeman Dyson. To them, the tech world is one of utopian promise, not peril. Biotechnology, they contend, offers hope for curing ailments long thought beyond treatment. Far from degrading the environment, high-tech agriculture can help conserve it by reducing the amount of land needed for growing food. As the Internet expands, it will create "electronic neighborhoods," crossing geographic and cultural boundaries and rooted in shared interests. And the riches the new economy generates, the "Party of Yeah" claims, will benefit not just those who command its heights, but also the rest of the world through more jobs, higher incomes, greater conveniences, and increasingly generous philanthropy.

D'Souza appears to be more inclined toward this optimistic prognosis, but does not shy away from the moral problems that come in its wake. Carried to extremes, he observes, biotechnology is dehumanizing, treating people as objects to be manipulated rather than fellow beings to be respected. While he agrees that high-tech entrepreneurs deserve the financial rewards the economy provides, "short-term inequalities of a certain magnitude," he cautiously writes, "disturb the social conscience, and they should." Indeed, even for the prosperous, money does not buy happiness, which requires the kind of meaningful life that the "virtual communities" of "techno-affluence" are hard-pressed to supply. Ultimately, the success of modern science, D'Souza concludes, may

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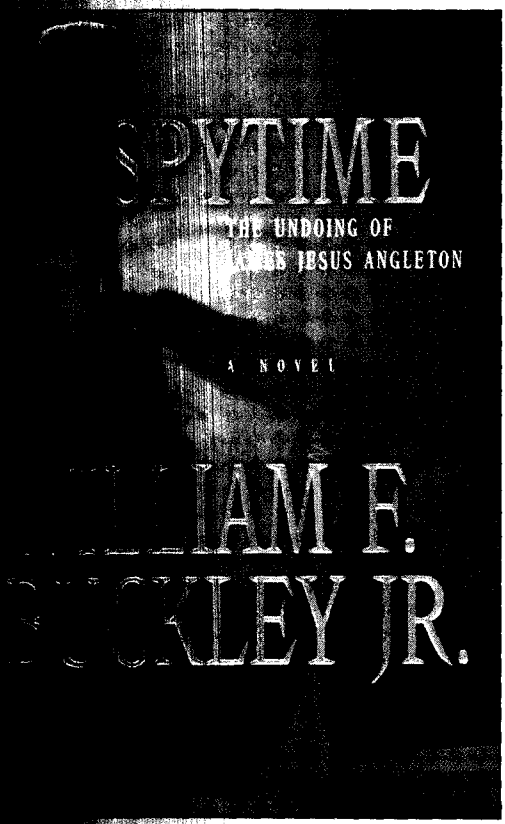

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leave us more beholden to "nature"—a thoroughly reengineered version, of course—than the master of it, just the opposite of what modern science set out to do.

However, after having skillfully illuminated the ethical quandaries of the new prosperity, about all D'Souza has to say in response is that we must learn how to cope with them. Since equalizing opportunities for children is unrealistic in a world with large differences in income and wealth, we should worry more, he writes, about providing equal "rights" to get ahead, whatever that might mean in practice. Rather than trying nostalgically to recreate yesterday's wholesome communities, D'Souza adds, we should recognize how the "Information Revolution" is undoing the social damage of the "Industrial Revolution," such as by enabling some of us to spend our working hours at home instead of the factory.

Since the new technology cannot supply its own moral values, D'Souza believes, absorbing the lessons of "good books" through traditional liberal education will be more important in the future than mastering the latest "high-tech" syllabi. So will persuading the public that modern capitalism depends on serving "the needs and desires of others," rather than "selfishness and greed," though this argument has been offered—with limited success—since long before the rise of "techno-affluence."

Above all, D'Souza suggests, we should stop trying to play God. Implicit (and in biotechnology, often explicit) in the ideas of what he calls the "techno-utopians" is a desire to do no less than to "remake other human beings and to redesign human nature." Yet such a notion is itself a rejection of human nature and a claim to power that is, D'Souza correctly notes, totalitarian. In her 1818 novel, *Frankenstein*, Mary Shelley warned against such a usurpation of the divine prerogative. Though it will not make as good a movie, D'Souza's book does so too.

Whether this message is likely to be heeded, however, might be clearer if D'Souza had devoted more time to explaining what has happened to the real God in the world of today's scientists and technological entrepreneurs. Explaining that the creation of the modern state required the privatization of religion in order to promote commerce and science (a project that succeeded most notably in the United States), D'Souza performs the difficult feat of "finding values in an age of techno-affluence" with astonishingly little reference to matters of faith. Perhaps most of the scientists and entrepreneurs he encountered were so thoroughly secularized that religion has no appeal for them. But in the past, no small number of innovators acted in part from religious conviction. (John D. Rockefeller believed he had been put on earth to transform God's gift of crude oil into useful products.) If today's innovators do not, then the likelihood they would forbear from usurping His role would seem small.

Nor did D'Souza seem to find out much about the impact of other value-shaping institutions besides religion. Although he repeats Adam Smith's famous observations about the role of conscience—the "impartial spectator"—in restraining self-interest, he gives short shrift to those groups, often known collectively as "civil society," which we have come to think play a crucial role in developing it. Are those at the forefront of the new economy essentially lone wolves, free from ties to families, friends, professional societies, and trade associations? Or are they embedded in a web of meaningful relationships that may act as a brake on their experimental zeal, telling them when they may be going too far?

As D'Souza reports, many of the new entrepreneurs and inventors are troubled by the riches they have obtained and are thinking about being philanthropic at an early stage in their lives. This suggests, at least, that conscience remains alive, even in a world of "techno-affluence," though just what it entails remains hazy.

We have ample reason to believe that both religion and civil society exert less influence than they once did. But we also have signs of a revival of interest in them, especially among the young and well educated. How this cultural clash resolves itself will determine whether or not the inventors and entrepreneurs who are doing so much to usher in a new era of prosperity will bring a healthy sense of virtue as well. **NR**

A Homeless Mind

GERALD EARLY

W. E. B. Du Bois: The Fight for Equality and the American Century, 1919–1963, by David Levering Lewis (Holt, 715 pp., $35)

W. E. B. DU BOIS, the noted black scholar and propagandist, is evoked frequently today, if not always with great understanding. He is the bête noire of conservatives like Dinesh D'Souza, who see his fixation on civil rights and protest as leading ultimately to theatrical militancy, deflecting blacks from the more practical path to self-sufficiency through hard work, thrift, and morality preached by Booker T. Washington. Yet I wonder if Du Bois would be so disliked by the Right if his meritocratic ideals, his high regard for standards, and his preaching against black "pathological" behavior were better known.

■

W. E. B. Du Bois might have accomplished a great deal more as a thinker had he not felt required to expend so much energy on racial politics.

■

On the other hand, in black intellectual circles, Du Bois is an icon. For Columbia's Manning Marable and Harvard scholars Henry Louis Gates and Cornel West, Du Bois is the ideal "scholar-activist," the heroic paradigm for African-American academics who describe themselves as engaged intellectuals challenging the very structure that supports them, as other Western intellectuals have done. Indeed, it would be safe to say that Du Bois is one of the

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founding fathers of Black Studies, particularly black history and black sociology. He created or reinvigorated virtually every idea that Black Studies promotes today: multiculturalism; Pan-Africanism and the idea of a black diaspora; the hatred of capitalism as racist and imperialist; the defense of any foreign power or ideology that opposes American interests or white racism; the ideal of racial solidarity and self-consciousness.

Though his admirers are loath to admit it, this legacy is decidedly mixed, as imprisoning as it has been liberating. Yet here too we have only a partial Du Bois. For the irony is that Du Bois created a "black" perspective and interests based entirely on "white" European ideas: the passion for science and empiricism; the romantic belief in the purity of folk culture; ethnic nationalism; anticapitalism; agnosticism; the psychological power of self-consciousness; individualism; the idea that only the educated few can really lead; the belief in a competitive meritocracy. While seeming to reject Eurocentrism, Du Bois, like many other black intellectuals, was really trying to make it usable, "to appropriate these white centuries," as James Baldwin wrote, and "make them mine."

In the first volume of his massive biography, published in 1993, David Levering Lewis covered Du Bois's rise from humble origins to become one of the most highly educated and innovative black thinkers in the country. Born in Great Barrington, Massachusetts, a few years after the end of the Civil War, Du Bois was raised by a single mother who had little money and seemed at times emotionally unstable. His white New England community was extremely supportive of his ambition to make something of himself. Largely through white philanthropy, he earned degrees from Fisk and Harvard and studied in Berlin at a time when few whites attained this level of education. His doctoral dissertation became an important piece of historiography on the slave trade, and he wound up at Atlanta University, one of the nation's foremost black liberal-arts colleges, where he produced a series of brilliant monographs on African-American life at the turn of the century. Personally, Du Bois was driven and arrogant, shaped by the same

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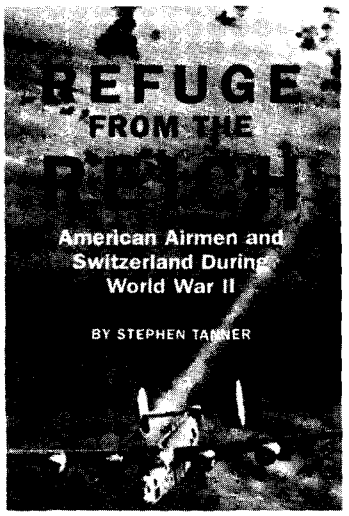

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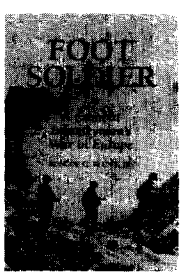

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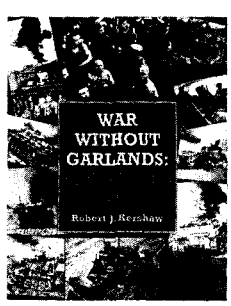

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New England Brahmin spirit that had shaped Henry Adams and Emerson. This temperament made him principled and learned but, in later life, inflexible and almost puritanically doctrinaire, consumed by the idea that racism could be defeated through social science. Adding to his complexity was the fact that he often simultaneously espoused conflicting views. He could be a Pan-Africanist with a strong black nationalist bent and an ardent assimilationist; a Communist advocating state ownership of property in the name of a revolutionary proletariat and a bourgeois elitist who thought only the "Talented Tenth" should lead. He was a feminist who argued passionately that no civilization could advance without equality for women, and an inveterate adulterer who played on the neurotic insecurities of talented women with considerable ease.

After Booker T. Washington's rise to national prominence in 1895 as an advocate of vocational education for blacks, Du Bois become his fiercest critic. Washington—or the Wizard, as he was called by friends and enemies alike—was the principal of Tuskegee Institute (a school he started in 1881) and the most important black leader of his day. He was also one of the more powerful machine politicians in turn-of-the-century America. Yet Washington publicly eschewed politics and advised blacks to do likewise, accepting segregation while quietly trying to build wealth, adopt middle-class manners, and gain acceptance through hard work. Washington advocated industrial education because most blacks then lived in the South as agricultural laborers. A liberal-arts education seemed impractical; he thought vocational education economically more advantageous and that polit-

■ SHELF LIFE ■

WHEN it comes to how history works, there are two basic theories: Tolstoy's and America's. Tolstoy wrote that the soldiers and other actors of the Napoleonic era "imagin[ed] that they knew what they were doing and did it of their own free will, but they all were involuntary tools of history, carrying on a work concealed from them but comprehensible to us." The American theory, ingrained in our national character, is drastically different: The Mets won the 1986 World Series *because Bill Buckner blew it*. End of story.

The obvious corollary of the latter theory is that, in just about every case, the historical event in question could have turned out differently. This goes a long way toward explaining America's love of "counterfactual history"—essays and stories examining the "what ifs" of the past. The most recent attempt to cater to this taste is *Almost America: From the Colonists to Clinton: A "What If" History of the U.S.* by Steve Tally (Quill, 368 pp., $14). Each of the book's 28 chapters begins with the story of an actual event in the American past, up to a crucial point at which the author asks, What if this particular historical individual had chosen differently? Each chapter then gives a plausible account of the alternative America created by the counterfactual choice, and—necessarily, one suspects, in an age of historical illiteracy—briefly summarizes the consequences of the choices that were *actually* made.

The counterfactuals ring true to the extent that they reflect what we know about the real character of the people involved. The best case in point is the chapter on the impeachment trial of Richard Nixon. Tally asks, What would have happened if Nixon had decided to stay and fight? He proposes that Nixon would not have left the outcome of the trial to chance, but would have resorted instead to extreme measures—which, in turn, would have resulted in a further erosion of his political support and made his removal from office a certainty. What's especially satisfying about this idea is that it echoes the origins of the Watergate scandal in Nixon's own paranoid character: They were going to win the election anyway, but they felt compelled to make *absolutely sure*—so they made the mistakes that led, ultimately, to defeat. It's the plot of many Tom and Jerry cartoons, and reinforces a suspicion that character is destiny, after all.

A somewhat dryer recent book is *Almost History: Close Calls, Plan B's, and Twists of Fate in America's Past*, edited by Roger Bruns (Hyperion, 282 pp., $23.95). Bruns reproduces actual documents from various turning points in history; in these cases the alternative history came so close to becoming actual that it made its way into the primary-document paper trail. We find here, for example, the famous Robert E. Lee military plans that a Confederate officer had used as a cigar wrapper. (The plans were thus discovered by the enemy, who were forewarned of the deployments before the battle of Antietam. If the plans had remained secret, the South could conceivably have won a major victory in 1862.)

Finally, for those who like their alternative history with the accent on the history and not the alternative, there's *How Hitler Could Have Won World War II: The Ten Fatal Errors That Led to Nazi Defeat* by Bevin Alexander (Crown, 352 pp., $25). This book, too, is effective due to its grounding in the known facts of character: Hitler made his military errors because of the kind of person he was. Alexander writes, for example, that the German bombing of Britain was inflicting serious strategic damage in 1940. "Then, on the night of August 24, ten German bombers lost their way and dropped their loads on central London. RAF Bomber Command launched a reprisal raid on Berlin the next night with eighty bombers—the first time the German capital had been hit. . . . Hitler, enraged, announced he would 'eradicate' British cities. He called off the strikes against sector stations and ordered terror bombing of British cities." Because he was unable to govern his rage, Hitler traded a strategy that was working for one that only sparked the fighting spirit of the British. To say it could have turned out differently would require Hitler to have been a different sort of person; but a different sort of person wouldn't have created the bloody mess in the first place. —MICHAEL POTEMRA

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ical rights were not necessary for blacks to rise in the United States.

Du Bois replied that without political rights blacks in the South could not protect whatever wealth they might accumulate. Nor could schools like Tuskegee exist without liberally educated black teachers (indeed, most of Tuskegee's teachers came from black liberal-arts schools like Atlanta University). Du Bois also maintained (correctly, it turns out) that the whites who supported Washington largely saw industrial education as a way of creating a cheap, politically powerless, underskilled black labor force. "So far as Mr. Washington preaches Thrift, Patience, and Industrial Training for the masses, we must hold up his hands and strive with him. . . . But so far as Mr. Washington apologizes for injustice, North or South, does not rightly value the privilege and duty of voting, belittles the emasculating effects of caste distinctions, and opposes the higher training and ambition of our brightest minds. . . we must unceasingly and firmly oppose [him]." The fight against the Wizard led the anti-Washington "radicals" to form the Niagara Movement in 1905, and four years later, with the support of socially conscious whites, most of whom were Jews, to create the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People. As editor of its house organ, *The Crisis*, Du Bois propagandized tirelessly for his race and for "race issues"; in his first volume, Lewis called it "the expression, in monthly installments, of its editor's intellectual and moral personality" and referred to Du Bois himself as "the silk stocking intellectual," urbane, aloof, continental in his deportment as if to the manor born.

In this second volume, Lewis continues his account of the very long life of Du Bois. By 1919, Du Bois at 51 was firmly established as one of the leading voices of black America, and *The Crisis* as its most important magazine. A new wave of militancy had swept black America, in part because of the tremendous surge of racial violence in the wake of World War I, with armed white attacks against blacks in Chicago, Omaha, Charleston, and the Arkansas delta. But this violence in itself was not the main reason for the rise of "the New Negro"—the racially self-conscious, politically aware, more militant urban black who appeared in ever-greater numbers as blacks began to migrate northward: The political currents of nationalism and Communism had affected black American leadership as well. The 1903 publication of *The Souls of Black Folk*, the most influential book written by an American black up to that time, his interest in Pan-Africanism, and his association with the radical anti-Washington movement made Du Bois, without question, the father of the New Negro Movement.

Lewis relates with thorough scholarship, lively prose, and sometimes excessive detail—a trait of the modern "definitive" biography—Du Bois's battles with black nationalist Marcus Garvey, his uneasy relationship with the Harlem Renaissance, and the Pan-African conferences he organized in the 1920s to combat European colonialism (although without rejecting the considerable allure of European culture itself). Du Bois fell out with the NAACP in the early 1930s as the Depression made him more sympathetic to Marxism and more inclined to see integration as a hopeless goal in an intractably racist United States. Returning to Atlanta University he established *Phylon*, the first interdisciplinary black scholarly publication, and continued to write significant

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books, including *Black Reconstruction* (1935), a radical Marxist reassessment of Reconstruction, and *Dusk of Dawn* (1940), a complex autobiography/race history.

Among the intellectual failings Lewis points out is Du Bois's tendency, shared by many black intellectuals today, to romanticize a certain type of authoritarian power, particularly if it is anti-American. Lewis chastises Du Bois's admiration for militarist Japan as a "dark" nation, although this was a sentiment shared by many blacks before and during World War II and enhanced by the mass internment of Japanese Americans. Du Bois is also taken to task for his equivocal feelings about Nazism; despite his abhorrence of anti-Semitism, he excused National Socialism on the grounds that dictatorship had been "absolutely necessary to put the state in order" after the collapse of the Weimar economy. Likewise, in a 1953 essay on Stalin, he wrote: "Joseph Stalin was a great man; few other men of the 20th century approach his stature. He was simple, calm, and courageous." As Lewis remarks, the essay "would have flattered the memory of Abraham Lincoln."

But this sort of political confusion does not get at the heart of Du Bois's dilemma, which was his own preoccupation with the function of the black elite. What most bothered Du Bois was precisely the insight arrived at by E. Franklin Frazier in his seminal 1957 work, *Black Bourgeoisie*: The black elite is preoccupied with its own self-esteem and other trivial matters, while most blacks distrust it because they feel it can be easily bought off. Helplessly insecure about its purpose and abilities, frustrated by its dependence on white elites, as well as jealous of them, today the black elite overcompensates for its alienation by identifying with a romanticized ghetto that supposedly represents black "authenticity." This type of preoccupation, fueled by an unyielding anti-intellectualism, has compromised the work of many black intellectuals. Du Bois, to his credit, admitted this problem, confessing in his *Autobiography* (1968) that he would probably never have been drawn to radical politics if he hadn't been black. But in an overwrought Cold War America that had little tolerance for any type of dissent, Du Bois had little choice, in his New England severity, but to renounce America altogether. He died in 1963 at the age of 95, a citizen of Ghana, dreaming of an *Encyclopedia Africana* that was never completed.

Du Bois succeeded against serious odds in becoming a renowned man of letters, a thinker of some accomplishment and even of some political influence. He shaped his group and, in some respects, his country, as few intellectuals have. But one also senses that the life of racial protest distorted Du Bois's aims and hopes, to the degree that the premise of the liberal education he received—that he was entitled to pursue any interest he wanted—was defeated. Instead he spent his life defending his race, sometimes brilliantly. He was, I think, in this respect, effectively Jim Crowed, and made the best of this necessity by insisting it was a virtue—that a black person's first and perhaps only duty is to defend his race. He might have accomplished a great deal more as a thinker had he not felt required to expend so much energy on racial politics. As Glenn Loury has observed, the fact that Du Bois became an unabashed apologist for Communism and an exponent of left-wing anti-Americanism in the 1950s—just when America was finally coming to grips with its race problem—is "nothing short of tragic."

This is why Du Bois, while being something of an indispensable man in American letters, is also something of a cautionary tale. For it is fine for Negroes to study Negroes, as Du Bois put it, so long as they are not compelled to do so because whites believe that is all a black person is capable of studying, or because it is an easy way to give blacks some sort of academic franchise. And while black intellectuals today rightly condemn racism and its works, they must also *understand* their native land, not simply oppose it as a form of hip resentment or complain about it in the bitter clichés that now seem de rigueur. Ironically, blacks continue in this way to be willingly confined by their race while denouncing any hint of racial barriers in society at large, a posture that can only continue to distort the way they see themselves and the world. Lewis's fine biography captures very well this complex problem in the life of America's most prominent black public intellectual. **NR**

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China and Her Dupes

JOHN DERBYSHIRE

The China Threat: How the People's Republic Targets America, by Bill Gertz (Regnery, 280 pp., $27.95)

In the middle 1930s, as Hitler consolidated his power in Germany and began rearming in earnest, the facts were duly reported to the British foreign secretary, Sir John Simon. However, Sir John, as one of his underlings later remarked, did not want to know "uncomfortable things." Still less did he want to trouble the British people with them. Many in Britain's diplomatic and intelligence services, angry and frustrated, took their information to the one person they could be sure would understand—Winston Churchill, then idling in the political wilderness—although by making themselves Churchill's informants they were undoubtedly risking their careers.

There is no Churchill in America today. Where are they to turn, then, those patriots in our security services who understand what the fecklessness, stupidity, and corruption of the Clinton administration are costing us? It would not be very surprising if they were to seek out a sympathetic journalist, in the slim hope that the American public might take their eyes away from Hollywood and Wall Street long enough to pay attention. If so, their contact of choice would be Bill Gertz, defense reporter for the *Washington Times*. In 1999, Gertz published *Betrayal*, a wide-angle look at the many follies of Clintonian diplomacy. *Betrayal* came complete with a lengthy appendix of U.S. government documents stamped TOP SECRET, CLASSIFIED, CONFIDENTIAL, or even more dramatically, pulled at the last minute to leave a blank page. This opened Gertz and his informants to accusations of disloyalty and

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illegal activity in divulging things that should not be divulged, and of alarming the American public when there is no real cause for alarm.

In *The China Threat*, Gertz concentrates on our country's relations with China, bringing the story up to date to mid 2000. Supported by a similar appendix of leaked or purloined secret reports, he argues that China has a master plan to increase her international stature and influence. The first phase will concentrate on getting the U.S. out of Asia, in furtherance of which, says Gertz, the Chinese have five active efforts under way: military, geostrategic, espionage, propaganda, and U.S.-political.

• The military effort is concentrated on taking control of the western Pacific, beginning with a fast and decisive strike against Taiwan. As preparations for the subjugation of Taiwan proceed (see below), military air bases on the Paracel and Spratly Islands in the South China Sea are being expanded, to give China control of the air and waters up to a thousand miles from her coasts.

• On the geostrategic front, China has taken control of the Panama Canal. Key facilities at both ends of the canal are now owned and operated by Hutchison Whampoa, a Hong Kong firm whose chairman, Li Ka-shing, is closely associated with the Beijing regime. China has also cozied up to Cuba, and now broadcasts eight hours daily of Radio China programming into the U.S.—a traditional method of communicating with clandestine intelligence officers.

• Chinese espionage agents have penetrated U.S. defense labs and agencies. Documents provided by a Chinese defector in 1995 show that China possessed classified data on seven U.S. thermonuclear warheads, including the very sophisticated W-88 warhead used in the Trident submarine D-5 missile and the W-70 "neutron bomb."

• Propaganda aims to fix in Western minds the image of China as nonthreatening, opening up and liberalizing under commercial pressures, and militarily ill-prepared.

• China has involved herself in U.S. politics by buying those who are for sale and gulling the gullible, both of which categories are legion in the Clinton administration.

The reader must make up his own mind about the credibility of Gertz's thesis. I record myself as entirely convinced—though, to be sure, this is from a starting frame of mind that needed little convincing. Bill Gertz is never going to win any prizes for elegant writing, but his is not the style of the obsessive crank. He does not leap to any unjustified conclusions. On Wen Ho Lee, for example, he does not leave us with any conclusion at all. Was Lee spying for China or Taiwan? Was he trying to fortify his résumé at a time of employee cutbacks in the lab? Or was he just a careless idiot? We do not know, and Gertz has sufficient respect for the facts to admit this, while laying out in devastating detail how the Lee investigation was compromised from the highest levels of the Departments of Justice and Energy.

He is particularly good on the psychological warfare being skillfully waged by the Chinese government. Have you heard the expression "million man swim"? This little propaganda gem refers to the only way by which, according to the China-is-not-a-threat crowd, the undersupplied Chinese army could cross the Taiwan Strait. The term seems to have been coined by Rear Admiral Eric McVadon, a leading shill for the Chinese Communist party. In fact, the Pentagon's own Defense Intelligence Agency has deduced, in internal reports quoted by Gertz, that China will attack Taiwan with massive barrages of short-range missiles, aiming to disable the island's military defenses and control the surrounding seas, before launching special-forces attacks to seize key points. At present rates of buildup, all the elements of this strategy will be in place by 2005.

Gertz also gives good coverage to another way in which China manipulates foreign opinion: her treatment of China scholars. If you want credibility as a Sinologist, you must make frequent trips to China. This involves getting a visa; and the Communists do not give visas to people of whom they disapprove. Thus, to build a career in China studies, you must kiss up to the Communist party. "China experts" who take the wrong line are marginalized—Steven Mosher, whose recent book *Hegemon* complements *The China Threat*, is a case in point. Something similar applies to

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news-gathering in China. A news agency consistently critical of Communist policy will not be given the access to top leaders that journalists prize. Hence those endless "soft features" on China in our news media: "Chinese Take to 'Fat Farms' to Lose Weight," etc, etc.

An area Gertz passes over rather too lightly, I think, is the way that China's propaganda effort has exploited the thought revolution the U.S. has endured over the past 30 years—"multiculturalism," racial politics, the teaching of history as a catalog of grievances, the obsession with "discrimination," and so on. In fact, this all works for the Chinese, everywhere. Gertz gives the following breathtaking instance, speaking of Clinton's first Energy secretary, affirmative-action hire Hazel O'Leary:

> O'Leary did away with color-coded security badges that helped identify whether persons were in unauthorized locations—such as those with large amounts of secret information. Why? She believed the colored badges were unfair, a form of discrimination.

With this kind of tone being set from the top, it is not very surprising that the DOE nuclear-research labs at Los Alamos and elsewhere leaked like sieves.

The Chinese are very clever at pressing the emotional buttons of the Clintonoid classes. The Wen Ho Lee case, for example, was quickly turned into an issue of race-baiting. I myself belong to some e-mail forums for Chinese professionals living in the U.S. All these forums have a Communist agent or two seeded among their membership, and not very difficult to spot. These stool pigeons were pushing the race angle of the Lee case for all they were worth, appealing—with considerable success—to the strong sense of racial solidarity that persists even among those who have become U.S. citizens.

A lot of people—even on the political right—think it has been sort of fun having Bill Clinton as president these past eight years. Well, maybe it has; but there is a price to be paid for such entertainment. If what Bill Gertz is telling us is true, as I believe it is, the price America will pay when this long peace ends will be very high indeed. **NR**

In Bad Taste

JAMES GARDNER

Exhibitionism: Art in an Era of Intolerance, by Lynne Munson (Ivan R. Dee, 237 pp., $27.50)

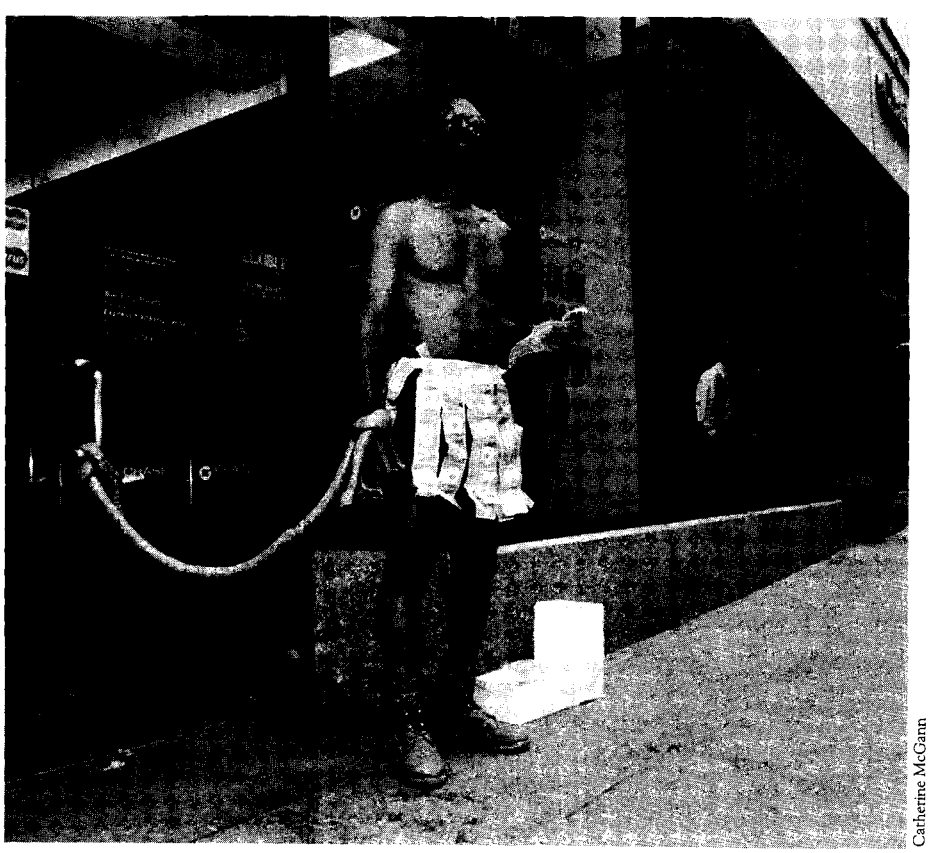
THE great cultural debate of the past decade has been waged by liberals who very much want to watch Karen Finley smear government-funded chocolate over her nether regions and by conservatives who would love nothing more than to abolish altogether the National Endowment for the Arts.

Though Lynne Munson, who once worked at the National Endowment for the Humanities under Lynne Cheney and is now a research fellow at the American Enterprise Institute, appears to be conservative in her sympathies, her new book seeks a middle ground that would preserve the agency while purging it of its rabid excesses and its overt politicizing of art.

Munson is an unabashed champion of serious culture; not every conservative could say as much. But her conservatism takes the form of praising an older generation's culture, the sort that was fostered during the early years of the NEA. Since then, much has happened to dismay her, and the name of this sweeping change of taste is postmodernism. As Munson explains, she "does not attempt to document the breadth of postmodernism's impact but rather to offer a few important examples of how deeply its intolerance has been felt." To this end she has examined not only visual artifacts but museums that have caved in to the lowest common denominator, academies that promote ideology over connoisseurship, and the NEA, which has often rewarded subversiveness over traditional artistic competence.

Munson's main theme is that an illiberal and generally leftist art establishment has gained control of the art

Mr. Gardner is the art critic of the *New York Post*.



Catherine McGann

ATM Piece, *performed in 1997 by the curiously named William Pope.L*

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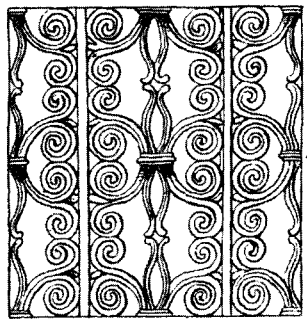
world. This assertion is not new, but Munson's contribution consists in tracing the institutional history by which we have come to this pass. One of her strategies is to defang the avant-garde by revealing its rootedness in the establishment. Thus she compares the ever-provocative Jeff Koons and his postmodern pornography to the works of Bouguereau, that arch-academician of 19th-century French painting. Both men, she insists, are products of the establishment. Likewise, she reveals how the "vanguardist" art featured in New York's Chelsea district and at the Whitney Biennial is, in the profoundest sense, establishmentarian, since it has behind it the full weight and prestige of the press, the museums, and the academies.

■

Unlike many other conservatives, Lynne Munson is not averse to public funding of the arts, so long as the art is deserving.

■

Unlike many other conservatives, Munson is not averse to public funding for the arts, so long as the art is deserving. She looks back with nostalgia to the early days of the NEA, during the mid '60s, when Henry Geldzahler oversaw the awarding of grants to artists of the caliber of Agnes Martin, Donald Judd, and Mark di Suvero. When Brian O'Doherty replaced him, everything started to change. The official preference shifted from painting and sculpture to performance and photography, and from formalism to highly politicized contextualism. The reductio ad absurdum of this trend, according to Munson, is *ATM Piece*, by William Pope.L (*sic*), in which the artist, wearing shoes, glasses, and black shorts festooned with a loincloth made of dollar bills, scored some vaguely anticapitalist point by attaching himself with a rope of sausage links to an ATM near Grand Central Station. Another grantee, Danny Tisdale, used the NEA funds he received in 1995 for a performance piece that consisted of running for a seat on the city council of New York, representing Harlem. (He lost.)



Further mischief is revealed in a chapter that charts the decline of Harvard's preeminence in the field of art history. After reaching its pinnacle under Sydney Freedberg, with his Old World connoisseurship, the school has fallen under the influence of T. J. Clark and Norman Bryson, who allowed their preferred orthodoxies (respectively Marxism and structuralism) to supplant such old-fashioned notions as beauty and truth. Munson's descriptions of the tawdry and cannibalistic infighting that took place in the department are especially interesting. And for those of us who have read Clark and Bryson's own writings with varying degrees of mystified irritation, her allegations of the former's racist misogyny and the latter's plagiarism are easily worth the price of the book.

Another chapter, entitled "The Persistence of Painting," discusses several interconnected groups of artists who have remained faithful to painting and representative art in general. These are the contemporary artists whom Munson seems most to admire. Although one cannot really say, on the strength of the reproductions that she includes, that these artists represent the best case that could be made for traditional art, Munson performs a valuable service by documenting the rise of this little-known movement, which seems to exist in a parallel universe to the art world as we know it.

One difficulty with *Exhibitionism* is that Munson approaches her subject in a somewhat piecemeal way. Nor does she seem interested in examining the ultimate causes of the sad state of contemporary art, or even in defining postmodernism clearly, since many of the artists she admires are more closely akin to postmodernism than to what it supplanted. Nevertheless, in a debate that has been characterized by willful misrepresentation on both sides, there is something inspiring in the balance and fairness of Lynne Munson's book. **NR**

■ FILM ■

In the Rough

JOHN SIMON

THE one thing American movies don't know how to do is grow up. Whatever money and technology can achieve, *Hollywood does in spades; but* produce mature movies? Fuggeddaboutit. Partly this has to do with primitive, uneducated consumers; partly with greedy and not much less primitive purveyors. Things are black and white: In the end, the good guys blow the bad guys to smithereens, the triumphant hero gets the alluring heroine, and we all go home happy.

Even the rare mature film, such as *The Insider*, must have at least an ambiguous enough ending not to depress anyone too much; regardless, it fails at the box office and the Oscars. Small independent films are not much better: They show the seamy side of life only to exalt it or to wallow in self-pity, and we all go home not exactly happy, but with the gratifying sensation of having seen something really grown-up, perhaps indeed art.

Lacking are the films that face reality foursquare and, delving below the surface, attain insights, perspective, perhaps indeed art. So hail to a fine new, fully mature American movie that meets all my standards for intelligence, originality, subtlety, wit, and artistry: Kenneth Lonergan's ***You Can Count on Me***, which I hope breaks the barriers of obtuseness and succeeds despite its virtues. But don't count on it.

Kenneth Lonergan is a profusely gifted young playwright whose *This Is Our Youth* was one of the finest seriocomic plays of recent years. He also co-wrote the screenplay for one of 1999's funniest movies, *Analyze This*, unjustly overshadowed by a somewhat similar TV favorite, *The Sopranos*. For *You Can Count on Me*, he is writer, director, and supporting actor, and shines at all three.

Samantha "Sammy" Prescott and her

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younger brother, Terry, were orphaned early when their parents perished in a car crash. Sammy stayed in their small Catskills town of Scottsville (actually Phoenicia, N.Y.), married a brute, and divorced him two years later. She now has an eight-year-old son, Rudy, a decent but unexciting lover, Bob, and a responsible position at the town bank. Terry left town, wandered all over doing odd jobs and getting into barroom brawls, once even, unbeknown to his loving and beloved sister, landing in jail.

Right now, Terry and his current pregnant squeeze are broke in Massachusetts, and he heads for Scottsville to borrow money from Sammy, who hasn't heard from him in a long while and is

■

Hail to a fine new, fully mature American movie—one graced with intelligence, subtlety, wit, and artistry.

■

overjoyed at his coming. Meanwhile her bank has acquired a new manager, Brian, a soft-spoken stickler for discipline who resents Sammy's somewhat early departures to fetch Rudy from school. Her brother's arrival is a godsend: Rudy and Terry bond together, and Terry resolves to stay on and look after Rudy's automotive and other needs.

But Terry, whose very speech is that of an unreconstructed hippie, is soon bored by Scottsville. Meanwhile Sammy gets a surprise marriage proposal from Bob, just after she starts a torrid affair with her boss, who is married to a pregnant but cold wife. Terry does pick up Rudy at school when he remembers, and takes him fishing, which is good, but also for a nocturnal visit to a pool hall (while Sammy is in a motel with Brian), which isn't. The differences between the devoted siblings come to a boil.

Terry is an atheist, Sammy (despite her affairs) a steady churchgoer. She recommends to her restless brother that he seek counseling from her priest, Ron, a bumbler sweetly played by Lonergan. Nothing much comes of it, but when Terry yields to Rudy's curiosity about his

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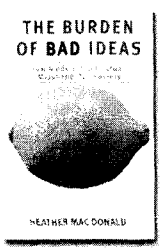

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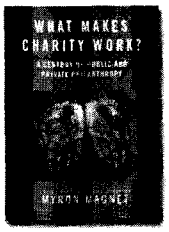

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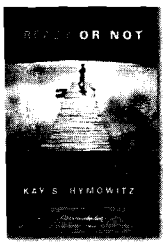

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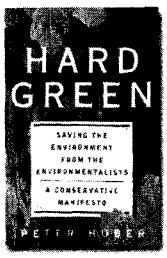

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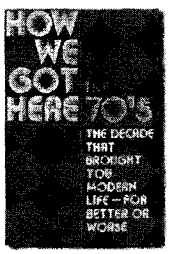

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—BENJAMIN FRANKLIN, 1789

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father and drives him to a shack in a neighboring town shared by Rudy Sr. and his girlfriend, real trouble erupts.

Scottsville and its beautiful hilly environs come to idiosyncratic life. The paternal sheriff, the befuddled priest, a bank employee who likes her computer screen in brash colors (played by Lonergan's real-life mate J. Smith-Cameron) contribute sharply etched cameos. The dialogue is pungent, the scenes are terse; Stephen Kazmierski's cinematography is pretty without being postcardish; the country music on the soundtrack is more ironic than obtrusive. And the acting is radiant.

Laura Linney is a superb Sammy: decent, understanding, but also impulsive and sharp-tongued, slightly harried, and enormously likable. As Terry, Mark Ruffalo is the quintessential charming ne'er-do-well, his soul a perpetually unmade bed. Their interaction is conceived and executed to hilarious and heartbreaking perfection. Brian is impeccably played by Matthew Broderick, with that eternally juvenile quality that makes his pedantry seem all the more comical. Rory Culkin, Macaulay's younger brother, brings a touching gravity to the role of the fatherless boy.

The film's honesty is in the absence of resolution. Nothing terrible happens, but a sense of the insoluble casts its bittersweet shadow. The sweetness is in the gallant optimism about Terry's future in which neither sibling believes but to which both valiantly adhere. It makes the film's closing scene irresistibly poignant.

■ Why are movies about sports so prone to sappiness? Is it because exaltation of the game relegates life to the uncomfortable role of backseat driver? Is it because investing mythic significance in sport is more than whacking a ball can in good conscience assume? Robert Redford's ***The Legend of Bagger Vance*** is no exception. Despite an auspicious film or two, Redford's directing has steadily headed in the direction of molasses, even where the subject called for sterner stuff.

Here we have a tale told in flashback by a lonely golfer named Hardy Greaves (an uncredited Jack Lemmon), who, as a boy years ago, caddied for Rannulph Junuh. Junuh was a young, brilliant golfer who snagged Adele Invergordon, Savannah's richest heiress, but whose World War I experiences shattered him. He turned into a boozing, card-playing bum, unable to return to either his game or his fiancée. When Adele tries to restore the failing family fortune by hosting a major golf tournament on neighboring Krewe Island—a resort that helped make and, after the Depression, unmake her late father's wealth—the Savannah nabobs agree to sponsor it provided a local champion participates. Little Hardy Greaves, a golf fanatic, rounds up the now disreputable Junuh and shames him into playing.

As Junuh practices by night in an overgrown garden, a young black man, Bagger Vance (Will Smith), appears out of the dark, either wisecracking or spouting woozy profundities on the order of "inside each and every one of us is our one true, authentic swing, something that's ours and ours alone." For five dollars, Vance offers to coach and caddy for Junuh as he faces two of the era's greatest golfers, the historic Bobby Jones and Walter Hagen. The whole town—not least the sassy and sardonic Adele (Charlize Theron)—watches raptly.

■

Despite an auspicious film or two, Robert Redford's directing has steadily headed in the direction of molasses.

■

Redford tries for arty devices. Early on, numerous shots start at someone's feet and slowly scale the body; the postwar parting of Adele and Rannulph is seen in long shot from a car window, a shot that reaches only as high as their waists. The fairway, part real, part computer imaging, is a magic world unto itself, sometimes shot from the point of view of a flying ball. The talk among Junuh, Jones, and Hagen (Matt Damon, Joel Gretsch, and Bruce McGill, respectively) is as witty as the screenwriter Jeremy Leven, working from a novel by Steven Pressfield, could make it (not very), and the suspense, both golfing and romantic, tries hard to be unbearable (but isn't).

I was mildly curious about who Bagger Vance was, emerging from nowhere and vanishing back into it: an improbably hip human being, a Malamudian angel, or the spirit of the rising black South? But given that the plot has more holes in it than a golf course, even that didn't matter all that much. **NR**

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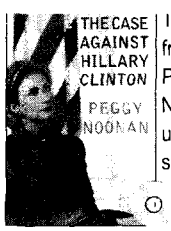

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WILLIAM F. BUCKLEY JR.

Clinton Has Loved Every Minute

NEW YORK, NOVEMBER 3

'ROCK AND ROLL was a young Jerry Lee sneaking over to Haney's in Natchez and watching an old black man play boogie-woogie piano. It was a young mascaraed Elvis sneaking down to Beale Street in Memphis, watching an old black man with a tin cup singing a Robert Johnson song. It was a young Billy Clinton watching the curvy, ripe peach-painted women taking their tricks into the Plaza or the Parkway or the Ina Hotel in Hot Springs. All three learned to play their instruments in proximity to that corrupt, exhilarating, and life-giving red neon glow. Jerry Lee had his piano, Elvis had his voice, and Billy Clinton had a silver tongue."

That's a passage from Joe Eszterhas's *American Rhapsody*, a ribald/poetic narrative of the Clinton years. And it goes on. There was never a better demonstration of the working of the silver tongue than in the December issue of *Esquire* magazine, where in a few thousand words Clinton leaves the reader weeping with sadness at the approaching end of, and gratitude for, a Periclean Age.

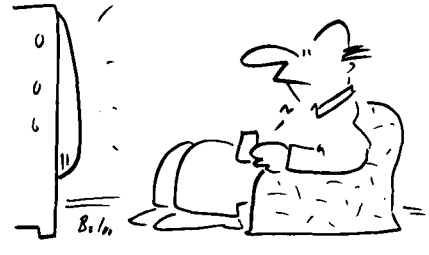
The "Exit Interview," as it is headed, has Mr. Clinton answering questions that move in the direction he directs, at a momentum that suits him. It begins, "How has the presidency changed you?" and ends, "Do you agree with those who have said you used up a lot of your political capital to get through the impeachment period?"

He answers the first question by a slow-paced admission that, of course, he has grown and learned from his experiences and become a better and wiser man on account of them. In answer to the last question, which comes thousands of words later, he is now in lyrical overdrive. He has consigned his critics to oblivion, challenged their credentials and sincerity, and depicted his years in the White House, especially the last six, as a golden age of presidential leadership that has brought efflorescence to the lives of the needy and the neglected and something on the order of peace to the world.

Bill Clinton is truly exhilarated, not merely by what he has done as president, but what he has survived, the only president impeached in this century. It was a *grand sleigh ride!* "It's exhilarating, it's wonderful. There's never been anything like it, and probably never will be. It's been just a joy. Even the bad days were good for me. Once I figured out that it was to some extent a cost of doing business, all the incoming fire, it sort of liberated me."

You have to admire the grand scale of Bill's theater. He talks about carrying two-thirds of the American people with him, through thick and thin—they always understood that his distraction was just a family affair. He doesn't deny that it was painful: because his enemies were dogged in their desire to subvert American democracy and overthrow him, for purely political reasons. He tells us—a wonderful touch—that during those days of distress, he was greatly consoled by the visit of President Mandela of South Africa, who arrived one day early on his official visit in order to tell Bill that he too had suffered a personal problem and had had a family falling out. Clinton does not describe Mandela's problems, satisfied to let the reader know that it was one of those generic problems that great men bump into. Mandela's problem was that his wife was convincingly accused of presiding over the murder of a teenage boy for political reasons. Suffice to say that Mandela knew that all great men have problems.

So? "So I have no complaints and I'm very grateful. I've had a wonderful, wonderful time. It's been good for—a fabulous experience for my family—for my wife and for my daughter, and I'll always be glad I did it. And I'm still working at it. I loved it. I loved it."



"We'll return you to reality right after these messages. . . ."

The widely noticed cover picture of Clinton in *Esquire* has him seated, legs widely separated. The camera shoots him at crotch level.

On his face is a smirk.

On Wednesday, candidate Bush reiterated his pledge to "elevate" the office of the presidency. But that wouldn't be hard. Al Gore would do that; so would Ralph Nader.

Reflections at 0600

NEW YORK, NOVEMBER 8

THE human-interest stories will be told to grandchildren. . . . Dozed off at 2:30, Gore ahead. Woke at 3:30, Bush declared winner. Dozed till 4:30, Gore has conceded. Woke at 5:30, Gore has unconceded. Took sleeping pill. Hmmmm. Will I get free sleeping pills if Bush is elected? If Gore is elected, will I double my consumption of sleeping pills?

So it goes. *USA Today* tried a roundup. What they said was that most whites, marrieds with children, weekly churchgoers, and pro-lifers voted Bush, while their opposite numbers mostly voted Gore. They added: Issues-oriented people favored Gore, personality-oriented folks favored Bush. Another generalist opines that the great dividing line is between men and women. Men go for Bush, women for Gore. Isn't it time to look back again at the Nineteenth Amendment? Since we're in the business of repealing things, maybe we should repeal the Thirteenth and Fourteenth. (Wake me at six, dear.)

What does the election absolutely prove, never mind the froth above? It absolutely proves that 100,000 stout-hearted Republicans should move to Florida. (Note for those who waver in their resolve: There is no state income tax in Florida.) The figures (Youth Vote for Gore) certainly raise the question whether it was a good idea for middle Americans to have children.

And while we're at it, since we learn that churchgoers tended to vote Republican, maybe it would be a good

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idea to require attendance at church on Sundays. With the Democrats' gift for improvisation, they might counter by suggesting that attendance at church should be required not only on Sunday, but also on Saturday! You see the slight maneuver there, "church" on Saturday? You've got to get up pretty early in the morning to beat Democratic strategists.

Then there is the pro-life question. Why not insist not only that the fetus be allowed to live, but be allowed to vote? Obviously, the vote would need to be exercised by the mother, who would act as regent for the child, pending maturity. The GOP could greatly profit from this increase in its constituency, and the Choice people would have the corresponding disadvantage of a forfeited vote every time choice was exercised, which seems only fair.

These are controversial proposals, but should be faced with that courage and strength of purpose and faith in the future that . . . who did say that? Was it Dan Rather? But that's confusing, like Clinton.

Clinton brings to mind a second reform. Perhaps he should be required to endorse alternating tickets in alternating election years. Like Churchill, when told in 1940 that the Italians had declared war on the Allies. Fair enough, he said, they fought on our side the last time around. But it's not right and not good politics to criticize the Italian vote. Those Italians who are white, married with children, are weekly churchgoers and pro-life, voted for Bush predominantly, so we would not want to mess with that. On the contrary, the Italians should be encouraged to have more children, and some should move to Florida to do their duty.

And, in Florida, they should look into the matter of the Hispanic vote, which went Democratic. How will it go in Florida if a President Bush recognizes Castro's Cuba? Perhaps an impeachment movement could be prepared. If President Gore makes it to the White House, impeach him!—which the Republican House could manage, and the GOP senators could . . . but no, there are not enough of them to convict.

The only thing for it is: Wipe the slate clean and schedule another election. But require, by amendment to the Constitution, that it end by midnight on Tuesday. No votes counted after that. People have to get to sleep.

Florida Showdown

NEW YORK, NOVEMBER 10

HERE is the beginning of wisdom on the electoral jam.

1) In competitions, somebody wins. That means that somebody loses.

2) Margins of victory can be interesting, suggestive; worth probing for a number of reasons. But they have nothing to do with the question of winning and losing.

3) In athletic contests it is nowadays not unusual for a skier or a runner to win by 1/100th of a second. Using round numbers, 100 million Americans voted, one half going to each of the two major candidates. Winning or losing by 300 votes in a political contest in which 6 million voted is to win or lose by 1/10,000th of a point. That kind of thing happens all the time in sports.

4) We are not engaged in a national plebiscite on the Electoral College system. Both of the candidates have sworn to uphold the Constitution, and it decrees how new presidents are to be selected. Those who wish to amend the Constitution are entirely free to do so. See Article V. And set aside a couple of years to get it done.

5) The single question that properly occupies us is what was the *recorded* vote in Florida. This is a different question from: What would the vote have been in Florida if a) Nader wasn't running, b) Buchanan wasn't running, c) voters gave more time to deliberating over the ballot they used, or d) voters had given more time to deliberating the leverage of a vote on that day, in that state.

6) Accordingly: *Procedure is king.* Nothing else counts, or should count. Procedure asks a relatively simple question: How did the voters mark their ballots on November 7th?

There is some pretty gross ideological opportunizing going the rounds. A full-page ad in the *New York Times* splashes in. The signers include Rosie O'Donnell, Gloria Steinem, Bianca Jagger, Arthur Miller, Toni Morrison, Joanne Woodward, and Paul Newman. What are they asking for? Hint: Two of the signers, Harold Evans and Harvey Weinstein, spent election evening in the company of Bill and Hillary.

What the so-called Emergency Committee of Concerned Citizens 2000 asks is that we acknowledge Al Gore as almost certainly the elected president "by a clear constitutional majority of the popular vote and the Electoral College." But there is no such thing as a "constitutional majority of the popular vote."

Well, they know this, but they have a nifty suggestion: "new elections in Palm Beach County as soon as possible."

Who would be allowed to vote? All qualified voters, including those who hadn't voted on Election Day? When would we hold that special election? How much money would the candidates probably spend in trying to woo that vote? They've already spent about $2 billion. Well, if it is all going to hang on another election, limited to one county out of 67 in Florida, what would the spending be there? There are 659,000 qualified voters in Palm Beach County, 64 percent of whom voted on Tuesday. Those who didn't vote join the 50 percent of Americans who didn't vote. But if the future of the universe hangs on their vote, the absentee voters might think better of it. Whom would they vote for?

Should there be a Palm Beach presidential debate? Three debates?

Friendly critics of the American system have got into the act. London's *Daily Mirror* informs its readers that America is "a laughing stock." An editorial in the London *Times* says that we are "a parody of democracy," an op-ed writer in the same paper says that we "have given hope to dictatorships everywhere." That sober critic of American ways thinks it's much better to do elections the way the Brits do. In 1945 this meant dismissing Churchill in the middle of the Potsdam summit conference with Stalin and Truman and sending in a successor. The *Daily Mirror* has a suggestion which the Emergency Committee of Concerned Citizens 2000 would surely endorse: "The simplest thing might be for President Clinton to be asked to stay on for another four years." Right. Another possibility would be to send Clinton to the UK and let him govern there for four years. Would anybody notice the difference?

Just remember: Procedure is everything. Due process. That is all we need to know. If Bush won by 327 votes, that is enduringly significant.

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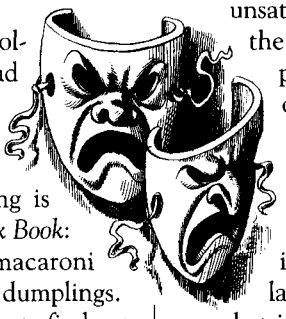
▪ THE MISANTHROPE'S CORNER ▪

FLORENCE KING

I STILL don't know who's president. The deadline for this column is none other than Tuesday, November 7. I could wait and turn it in a couple of days late, but I have a Miss Goody Two-Shoes streak. Not as big as Al Gore's, but still big enough to make me loath to break my ten-year NR record of never missing a deadline. This way I can go on giving my supercilious sniff of "*I'm* never late" whenever the editors are slow sending me a galley proof.



Besides, I don't want the column hanging over my head while I watch the returns. I plan to spend all day Tuesday cooking so I can spend all night eating. Everything is from my *Passive Suicide Cook Book*: vichyssoise, Stroganoff, macaroni and cheese, and raspberry dumplings. I'd love to invite Ralph Nader to find out if he eats food. Whenever I start to admire him I remind myself that integrity without sensuality is just as bad as sensuality without integrity.

Speaking of sensuality, I'm wondering if the Gore Kiss will enter our tradition of instant traditions. According to the iron laws of American insecurity, what once is started cannot stop. Take the State of the Union message. Presidents used to send them up to the Hill to be read aloud by a clerk, but once Woodrow Wilson decided to deliver his in person, all subsequent presidents followed suit.

The tradition of instant traditions also governs bad taste. LBJ was the first to refer to his wife by her first name; Jimmy Carter was the first to hold hands with his, as well as the first to walk part of the way up Pennsylvania Avenue on Inauguration Day, and now they all do it. It's democracy's version of "the law of the Medes and Persians, which altereth not."

Will the Gore Kiss become de rigueur, at least for Democrats? Will non-kissers be accused of not loving their wives as much as Gore loves Tipper? And if so, how long before the Republicans cave? Probably no longer than it usually takes them to cave.

Miss King can be reached at P. O. Box 7113, Fredericksburg, Va. 22404.

Tipper's situation is cause for alarm. He's been kissing her again at various campaign stops, sometimes to shouts of "Let's see the kiss!" One newspaper ran a front-page panel of photos showing him kissing her in three different places (i.e., geographic locations). If foreplay on the hustings becomes an instant tradition, Tipper will be remembered as the first political wife to be forced into the role of a Zola heroine, a woman aroused but left unsatisfied, the Thérèse Raquin of the whistlestop, consumed by pelvic furor as she gazes out over a sea of cheese-wedge hats in the middle of the night, somewhere in Wisconsin.

An aroused but unsatisfied woman is pitiable, but a man in the same condition is the last word in virility. Gore initially tried to use double entendres to pioneer male arousal as an instant tradition, but it takes a talent for indirection and understatement to put double entendres across. Tearing off his jacket and bellowing "I'm HOT!" at the top of his lungs didn't work, so he opted for frank tumescence, appearing on the cover of *Rolling Stone* with his Dingell-Norwood so prominently outlined that they had to airbrush the front of his pants.

Meanwhile, Clinton posed for *Esquire* sprawled out like a male odalisque, his tie forming an arrow pointing to his Potus. Welcome to the future: Henceforth, in the cherished tradition of instant traditions, whenever Americans look at a presidential candidate we will see not only Tippecanoe, but Tyler too.

Another arena of instant tradition is the political gaffe. Since gaffes are inevitable, the candidate can only hope that his will be the lovable kind, like Truman's threat to beat up the music critic who panned his daughter's singing, or else the kind that enter the language and become titles for history books, like Harding's "normalcy."

This is exactly what W. pulled off. His malapropisms are, after all, a direct link to Mrs. Malaprop, Sheridan's most beloved character. He also crafted "More and more of our imports come from overseas" to go with Calvin Coolidge's "When a great many people are unable to find work, unemployment results." Best of all, he poached on the liberals' sacrosanct hunting ground: public television. His appearance in Florida, where a pumped-up, cheering audience inspired him to shout "This place is on fire!" in a crowded gym, was straight out of *Fawlty Towers*.

Gore's gaffes, on the other hand, are one of a kind, arising from an eldritch landscape of quicksand lakes that no one else would ever wade into. Typical is his reference to the "extra-chromosome Right" that has haunted him for six years. Everyone assumes he meant Down syndrome, but being a keeper of odd knowledge, it is much more likely that he meant the "criminal type" as defined by the 19th-century Italian physician Cesare Lombroso: brutish men with sloping foreheads and overlong arms whose XYY chromosome was thought to predispose them to violence. This is just the sort of thing Gore would know.

I believe his union-lullaby story. As a '60s college student he must have heard Pete Seeger's recording of old union songs. The only one that stood out was "Solidarity Forever," set to the tune of "The Battle Hymn of the Republic." The rest all sounded alike, as do Baptist hymns, barracks ballads, sea chanteys, and all the songs people sing when they're fired up, homesick, or drunk.

We can guess what happened. His parents, being Gores, were probably capable of singing union songs to a baby, and Al's speaking voice hints of tone deafness, which might also run in the family.

Whoever wins will need a defense against the media's gaffe patrol, so here it is:

Legions of intellectuals have poked fun at Louis XVI for writing the single word, "*Rien*," or "nothing," in his diary on the page for July 14, 1789, the day the Bastille was stormed. It's supposed to prove how hopelessly stupid he was, but what his critics overlook is that it was not his personal diary but his hunt diary. Louis, who hunted every morning, merely meant that he hadn't bagged anything. **NR**

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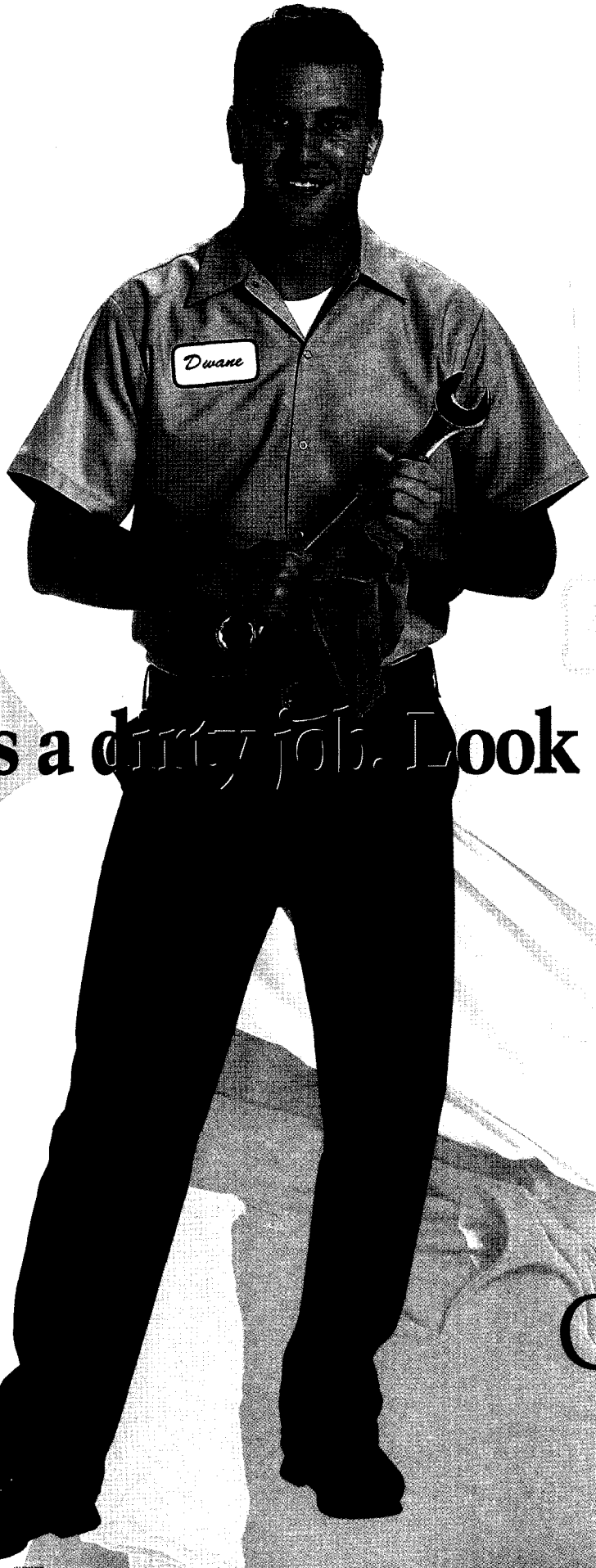

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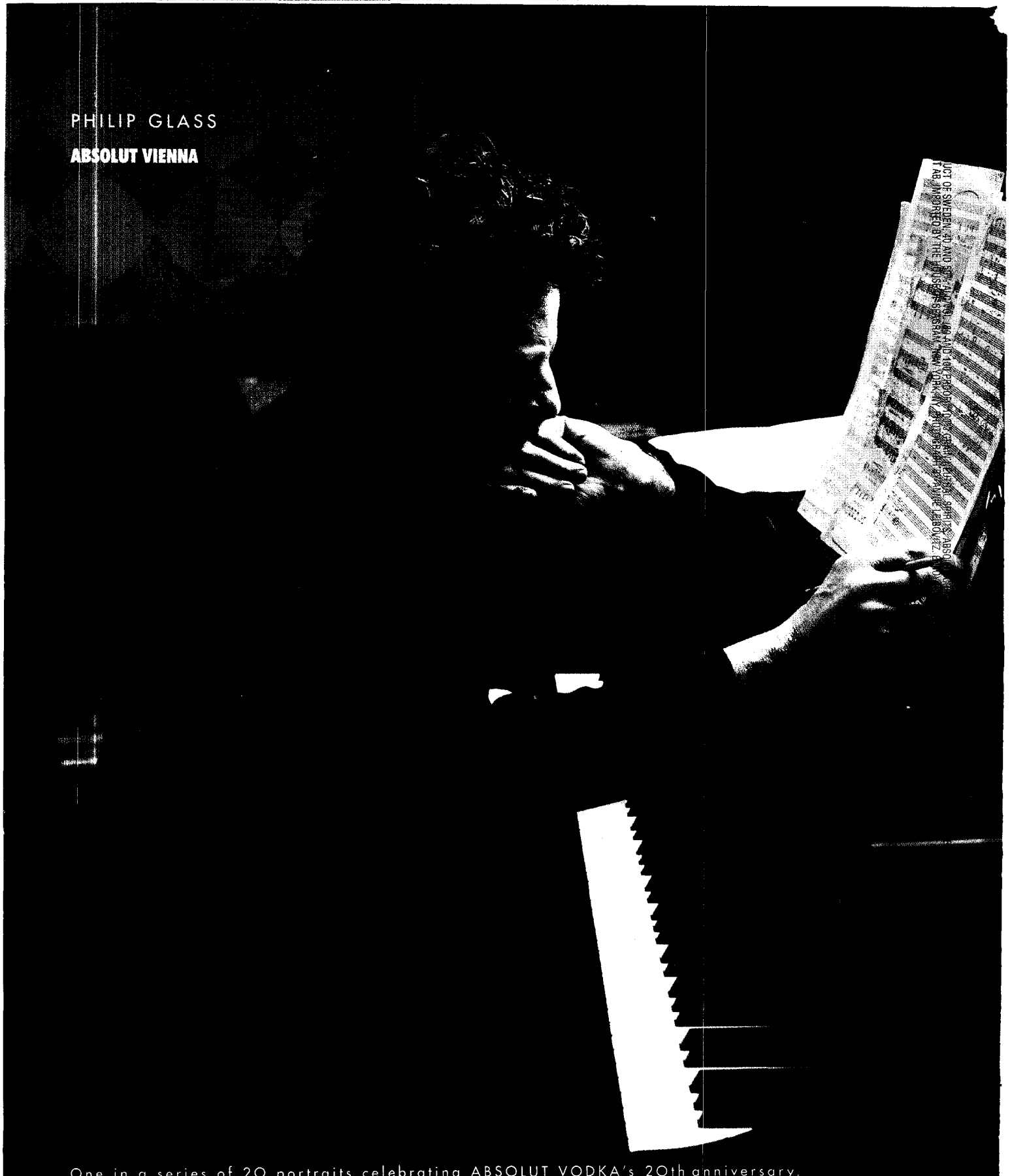

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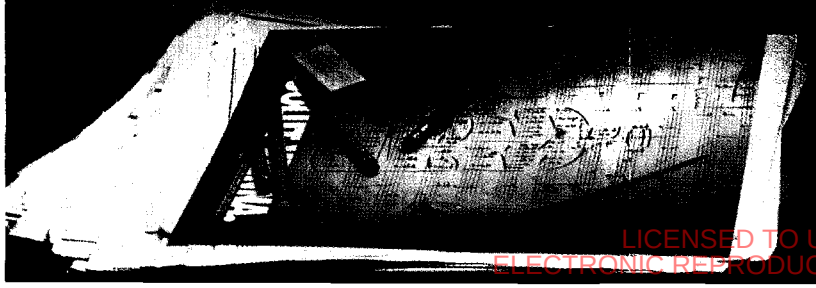

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